

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

W. L. (Bud) Rusho



**STATUS OF INTERVIEWS:
OPEN FOR RESEARCH**



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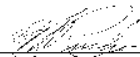
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**STATEMENT OF DONATION
OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW OF
W. (BUD) L. RUSHO**

1. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth in this instrument, I, W. L. Rusho, hereinafter referred to as "the Donor", of Salt Lake City, Utah, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter referred to as "the National Archives"), acting for and on behalf of the United States of America, all of my rights and title to, and interest in the information and responses (hereinafter referred to as "the Donated Materials") provided during the interview conducted on June 26 and June 27, 1995, at the Upper Colorado Regional Office of the Bureau of Reclamation, and prepared for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration in the following format: cassette tapes and transcripts. This donation includes, but is not limited to, all copyright interests I now possess in the Donated Materials.
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Date: January 27, 1963

Signed: 
W. L. Rusho

INTERVIEWER: _____
Brit Allan Storey

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Signed: _____
Archivist of the United States

INTRODUCTION

In 1988, Reclamation began to create a history program. While headquartered in Denver, the history program was developed as a bureau-wide program.

One component of Reclamation's history program is its oral history activity. The primary objectives of Reclamation's oral history activities are: preservation of historical data not normally available through Reclamation records (supplementing already available data on the whole range of Reclamation's history); making the preserved data available to researchers inside and outside Reclamation.

The senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation developed and directs the oral history program. Questions, comments, and suggestions may be addressed to the senior historian.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS
W.L. (BUD) RUSHO

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, Senior Historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing [W. L.]¹ “Bud” Rusho, a retiree from the Upper Colorado Regional Office in Salt Lake City, Utah, on June the 26th, 1995, at about one o'clock in the afternoon. This is tape one. This interview is being conducted in the regional offices in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Mr. Rusho, I'd like to ask you where you were born and raised and educated, and how you ended up at the Bureau of Reclamation.

Born in Montrose, Colorado

Rusho: Okay. I was born in Montrose, Colorado, in 1928, and went to school in western Colorado—Gunnison and Montrose—and then into

1.

Note that in the text of these interviews, as opposed to headings, information in parentheses, (), is actually on the tape. Information in brackets, [], has been added to the tape either by the editor to clarify meaning or at the request of the interviewee in order to correct, enlarge, or clarify the interview as it was originally spoken. Words have sometimes been struck out by editor or interviewee in order to clarify meaning or eliminate repetition. In the case of strikeouts, that material has been printed at 50% density to aid in reading the interviews but assuring that the struckout material is readable.

The transcriber and editor have removed some extraneous words such as false starts and repetitions without indicating their removal. The meaning of the interview has not been changed by this editing.

Oral history of W. L. (Bud) Rusho

Denver at the start of World War II. I graduated from East High School in Denver and then attended four years at the University of Colorado-Boulder, graduated in political science and economics.

Investigator for the Civil Service Commission

At that time, there was an opening for an investigator job with the [U.S.] Civil Service Commission and all you had to have was fairly good grades and a graduate B.A., so I became an investigator for the Civil Service Commission based in Denver, worked in Denver, Casper, and Grand Junction. Then in 1958, the workload kept fluctuating up and down and the number of cases that they would have us do background investigations on, mainly for AEC [Atomic Energy Commission] personnel, and at any rate, the workload got so low at this time in early '58 that they said they were going to have a big RIF [reduction in force], and I was going to have to be out of a job.

Moves to Public Affairs Job at Glen Canyon Dam Construction Site

But the Civil Service Commission, having contacts all over, knew what jobs were available, and advised me that a public affairs job was available at Glen Canyon Dam, and so I said I was interested in this. And, I drove down to Page—well, actually, the office at that time was in Kanab, because the offices in Page were not completed yet and housing was not completed. I had an interview with the project construction

Bureau of Reclamation History Program

engineer, Lem, Lemuel Wylie, W-Y-L-I-E, and he seemed to approve it, and I went back to Grand Junction.

Interviewed by Herbert Simison

The public affairs officer in Salt Lake, who was Herbert Simison, S-I-M-I-S-O-N, came over and interviewed me, and they both approved me for the job. As it turned out, the RIF was canceled at the Civil Service Commission, but I said, "No, I want to get out of this place with the fluctuating workloads. It sounds more interesting, anyway. I like that red rock country," and so I took the job at Glen Canyon in May of '58. I was with Reclamation from there until the dam was completed in 1963, and I was told I could either lose my job or move to Salt Lake, so I moved to Salt Lake and became the assistant public affairs officer in the Upper Colorado Region, which was then the Fourth Region [Region IV] of the Bureau of Reclamation, and I was assistant until 1966, when Mr. Simison transferred to the Environmental Protection Agency, and I became public affairs officer and worked in public affairs from then on until 1988, when I retired.

Storey: Good. Good.

Rusho: Question?

Storey: When was it you graduated from East High School?

Rusho: 1946.

Storey: And then you went directly on to college?

Served in the Army in Alaska

Rusho: No, I had two years in the Army, two years in the Army in mainly Alaska. I ended up at the port of Whittier for a year, and I was a staff sergeant ~~in charge of quartermaster. I wasn't in charge, of course, the officer was in charge.~~

Storey: Whittier is in Alaska?

Rusho: Whittier is a big port. It was the *big* Army port supplying *all* of Alaska at that time, and it's in a beautiful fjord with lots of mountains and glaciers ~~and everything~~, but lots of terrible weather, too. But all of the Army ships would dock there, and there was a railroad, the Alaska Railroad, had a terminus there, went through the mountain three miles and then sixty miles to Anchorage, to Fort Richardson, and then on up to Fairbanks.

Storey: You say through the mountain. You mean through a tunnel?

Rusho: Through a big ~~tunnel~~, three-mile-long tunnel. The only way in and out. There were no roads. ~~They were only supplied by ships and railroad.~~

Storey: Did you volunteer for the Army or were you drafted?

Rusho: I volunteered, because at that time they had the G.I. Bill was still in force, and you could get two years of college for every year you put in the Army. It was a very good deal, so I took that.

Storey: You went in for two years, then?

Rusho: Went in for two years and got four years of college.

Graduated from the University of Colorado in 1952

Storey: You got an undergraduate degree at the University of Colorado.

Rusho: Yes, that's right.

Storey: And at Colorado, political science and—

Rusho: Economics.

Storey: Economics. So that would have been, say, about '48 to '52?

Rusho: Right. '48 to '52.

Storey: And then to the Civil Service Commission in '52.

Rusho: Yes.

Investigated Security Clearances for the Civil Service Commission

Storey: Now, when you say an investigator for the Civil Service Commission, this was investigating security clearances or what?

Rusho: Yes. ~~It was primarily people who~~ I'd say 90 percent of the work was Atomic Energy Commission employees, people working at places like Rocky Flats or Amarillo or wherever they had

AEC facilities. These could have been machinists or office workers or whoever might have access to something that the government considered classified. So we investigated them by talking to their former neighbors, their former employers, checking their arrest records, and things like this.

But we *did* also handle the straight Civil Service investigations, say postmaster investigations, if three or four people applied to be postmaster. With any derogatory complaint against a federal employee, we'd investigate that—if they had a bad arrest record. At that time, homosexuals were considered very derogatory and undesirable, so we investigated all that. And drunkenness, that sort of thing.

Storey: Did you ever have any investigations that related to the Bureau of Reclamation in any way, that you remember?

Rusho: I did have one, as I recall, in Cody, Wyoming. I had to investigate the project engineer at Cody. I don't recall why I had to do it, it was too long ago, but I did go up there and investigate him and talk to a lot of the agricultural specialists and the people who had some background in the Shoshone Project at that area.

Storey: When did you first become aware of the Bureau of Reclamation?

Rusho: Well, if you're born in Montrose, Colorado, you can hardly avoid Bureau of Reclamation, because the Uncompahgre Project is *the* whole sustaining factor in the Uncompahgre Valley, with the

Gunnison Tunnel. So I was *always* aware of the Gunnison Tunnel. Didn't know who built it, of course. Just later as I got through elementary school, I became aware of the Bureau of Reclamation, and it was considered a highly favorable, very beneficial organization. So when I had the chance to join it, I thought, "This is a wonderful outfit. They do the country a lot of good." So I always had a very favorable idea of it since childhood.

Storey: Did you actually live in the town of Montrose?

Rusho: Yes, my dad ran a liquor store there.

Storey: You didn't live out on a farm or anything?

Rusho: No, I didn't live on a farm. I disliked the town, but that's beside the point. (laughter)

Storey: You interviewed with the project construction engineer and the Salt Lake City public affairs officer.

Rusho: Yes.

Storey: Did you have to fill out any paperwork at that time for federal employment?

Rusho: Well, of course, I was already a federal employee working for Civil Service, *but* I had to fill out an application, naturally, for the job.

Storey: Do you remember anything about the interviews?

Rusho: ~~In those days, yeah.~~ Well, not very much, except that I remember Simison, when he came over from Salt Lake, had me go through a whole bunch of very nice photographs of Glen Canyon Dam and pick out which ones were the best and what was good about each photograph. Apparently I passed, at least according to his estimation.

Interview with Project Construction Engineer, Lem Wylie

With Wylie, it seemed to me it was a very short interview, that he just wanted to meet me and to kind of assess my personality, and he really didn't care a lot about my background, which I really didn't have very much for public affairs, as it turned out. In fact, some people in the Civil Service questioned whether I [was] really qualified to be a public affairs officer because I had no journalism or anything like that. Then they found that when I was in Alaska, I had a part-time duty writing the post newspaper for about four months. They said, "Oh, that's good enough." So on the basis of that, I got the job.

Storey: What made you want to change fields so radically? It *seems* to be radical from outward appearances.

Rusho: Well, first of all, the favorable background impression I had of Bureau of Reclamation from childhood, that this was a wonderful, beneficial agency. The second was the dramatic nature of Glen Canyon Dam and the country around it. It offered, to me, a very interesting challenge, and it

proved to be the case. It's a *lot* more dramatic than Grand Junction.

Storey: Were you stationed in Grand Junction with Civil Service then?

Rusho: Yes, I was for a while. /First I was in Denver, then in Casper, Wyoming, and then in 1954, went to Grand Junction and was there for four years until '58.

Storey: And then you went down to Glen Canyon.

Rusho: Right.

Storey: So this would have been at the very beginning of construction of Glen Canyon?

Rusho: No, the first blast of construction was October 1956, but at that time they had *no* facilities, they had *no* town. It was a case of the Bureau rushing in to do some work so that they could say to Congress, "This project is under way. We've already spent money, so keep the appropriations coming." That was a typical Bureau strategy. Then after they did the first blast, *then* they let contracts for completion of the tunnels, the building of roads, and the building of the town of Page, and *that* sort of thing.

Arrived at Glen Canyon in 1958

So *that* was in '57, they were building the town of Page[.] ~~, and into '58.~~ When I came here [in 1958], there *was* a town, but it was a very raw

place. There wasn't a blade of grass in the whole town, or a tree, or anything like that.

Storey: Were you the first public affairs officer?

Rusho: No, no, there was a gentleman named Bob Rampton, R-A-M-P-T-O-N, who had the job first. He was from Salt Lake. I never met him, and I don't really know why he left, but he left suddenly, apparently, and there was a vacancy that I was able to take over.

Original Office was in Kanab, Utah

When I got there, they gave me an office at Kanab in the old schoolhouse that the Bureau had taken over as an office. It was an *abandoned* school, and they had fixed it up and put some paint around. I remember my office was in a former boys' rest room. (laughter) It had plumbing, concrete floor, and drain and everything right in my office.

Developed His Job at Glen Canyon Himself

I got in there, and the project construction engineer didn't know what my duties were. I didn't know. So I just kind of sat and watched other people for a month or so and started following the photographers around so I could see what was going on. Once in a while a newspaperman would call and I'd try to get him some answers. Gradually it worked into a pretty big job, really, but it was a job that I felt that I kind of shaped ~~the job~~ myself, because the

construction engineer gave me the freedom to do that.

Lemuel (Lem) Wylie

Storey: What was the construction engineer like, Mr. Wylie?

Rusho: Well, Wylie was an interesting person. Well, what was he? He was a man who really followed the military tradition. He'd been a Marine, a Marine colonel in charge of—I think it was Seabees, construction or something. He expected obedience to his orders, and he ran it in kind of a military fashion. He was never very friendly, at least toward me. I suppose he had some *select* circle of friends. Of course, he extended his friendship to people he thought could be of advantage to him or the Bureau in the town, but he never thought much of [his] employees.

I remember once we had a ceremony where we dedicated the bridge, ~~I think it was~~, the Glen Canyon Bridge, and I had organized a whole bunch of committees to handle certain aspects of this—the traffic and the crowds and the refreshments and things like this. All of these were Bureau employees. After it was over, it turned out very successful, I wrote up a bunch of letters, one to each of these employees, thanking them for their cooperation and everything, and Wylie looked at that and he said, “What the hell are we sending letters to our own employees for? They got their pay, didn't they?” You know. “Why do they need thanks, too?” That kind of an attitude.

Storey: Very military in his approach. "I'll tell you what to do. You just do it."

Rusho: "You just do it." Right." And as long as you're getting your pay, why do you expect anything else?"

Storey: Did that cause problems with the staff?

Rusho: It might have to some extent, although I didn't experience any of it directly. I don't know, really.

Storey: When you went down to Kanab and set up office in the boys' lavatory, where did you live?

Lived in a Trailer in Kanab

Rusho: We had a trailer. They had some Bureau-owned house trailers that they had a little camp on the south edge of Kanab, and these were *miserable* little trailers. They were only thirty feet long and eight feet wide, and I had three little kids, and we were just jammed together like sardines in that thing. I remember the best time of all was when my wife took the kids and went to Denver for a month to visit her parents, and then I had enough room. But they were pretty miserable. That was from May until November of '58, we lived in those.

Moved to Three Bedroom House in Page

Then in November of '58, the government housing at Page was completed enough so that I could get a house, a three-bedroom house.

Storey: So you moved over there?

Rusho: Yes.

Storey: How far away is Page from Kanab?

Rusho: About seventy-five miles.

Storey: So if you wanted to go out and see what was going on at the dam or, as you say, follow the photographers around, you had an hour-and-a-half drive each way, probably.

Rusho: Yeah, we did. We would leave at eight in the morning and usually get back about six at night. But we didn't go *every* day. There were days when there was just office work to do or staff conferences and things like that, so it would be maybe two or three times a week.

Storey: Did Mr. Wylie have staff meetings?

Rusho: Boy, I can't remember any. I don't think he was that kind. He didn't care what people thought. He would call them in mainly one at a time and tell them what he thought they ought to know and give them their orders, and that was it.

Storey: Who else was working in the office where you were working?

Rusho: You mean in the whole Bureau there?

Storey: Yeah. I presume when you were able to move your family to Page, the office also moved to Page.

Office Moves from Kanab to Page

- Rusho: Yes. Actually, the office had moved to Page about a month previous. ~~They had enough—well, they had finished their office building, and so~~ Some of them moved to Page before I did. Some of the government housing was complete, and the building was complete for their office, so they moved before I did.
- Storey: And was the government paying for these moves?
- Rusho: Oh, yeah.
- Storey: They paid for your move from Grand Junction down?
- Rusho: Oh, yes.
- Storey: And did they pay for you to come and be interviewed?
- Rusho: Yes, they did, as a matter of fact.
- Storey: Good. Good.
- Rusho: That was good.
- Storey: But moving can be *very* disruptive.
- Rusho: Yes. Well, we had to put all of our furniture in a government storage in Page, in the government warehouse, and that was when we first moved to Kanab, because we had no place for it. So it was stored in the government warehouse, and it was there until we got the house in November, then we

could go to the warehouse and get the furniture and move it into our house.

Storey: As you got your feet on the ground with this new job, what kinds of issues were coming up that the public affairs officer was giving attention to?

Media Requests about Glen Canyon Dam

Rusho: Well, a lot of it was requests from media. There was a lot of interest in the technical journals, *Engineering News Record*, and other magazines like that, but there were also requests from newspapers, the *Arizona Republic*, *Salt Lake Tribune* would frequently send somebody down, and so I got more and more *busy* taking these reporters and photographers around. I mean, it wasn't a full-time job, but that was a large part of it.

Then occasionally we would get requests for something in writing. You know, some newspaper or magazine would say, "Can you give us a thousand words on the status of construction and a few photographs?" And I would get that and I would have to ~~do it~~, write up things like that.

Supervised the Photographers

Then, of course, I was placed in charge of the photographers; I was their boss. So I would kind of direct their activities and make sure that the coverage was complete.

Storey: For the construction?

Became Interested in the History of the Area

Rusho: Yes, for the construction. Of course, at that time I started to get quite interested in the history of the area, in Glen Canyon, and what was to be covered by Lake Powell, so I increasingly would ask the photographers to take pictures of these side things. One time I know Wylie caught me at it and said, “Your job is to be concerned with that hunk of concrete down there and nothing else.” So, I tended to ignore him.

Storey: What kinds of things were going under water?

“Glen Canyon was a magnificent place. It would have been a national park . . .”

Rusho: Well, Glen Canyon was a magnificent place. It would have been a national park if the Bureau had not seized it, without public knowledge of what was there. It was a beautiful red-rock canyon. It had a whole ecosystem of fish and birds and animals, and they were all adjusted to each other, you know, having evolved over centuries. It had scenery, spectacular cliffs and grottos with dripping ferns into ponds, just a wonderful place.

Storey: And you got back in there, I take it.

Rusho: I got in there. I'd go up occasionally. Then in the *latter* part of the construction, '62 and '63, I managed to make two river trips with a professor of history, *at* Bureau expense, to stop at all the historic points that we knew of and some of the archeological spots, there were lots of ruins there,

and take a lot of pictures, motion pictures. So I think we recorded it pretty well.

Storey: Which professor of history was that, do you remember?

C. Gregory Crampton and Writing the History of Glen Canyon

Rusho: His name was C. Gregory Crampton.

Storey: Tell me about Mr.—I think it's actually Professor Crampton.

Rusho: Yes, Professor C. Gregory Crampton. You've heard the name?

Storey: Oh, yeah.

Rusho: He died in May of this year.

Storey: Oh, he did?

Rusho: Yeah. In fact, we were down ten days ago distributing his ashes at Lee's Ferry.

Storey: What was he like?

Rusho: Well, Greg was a typical professor in some ways, in that he was looking out after his academic credentials and he was trying to get credit for research and try to find new projects and that sort of thing. But he found in me a kind of a friend that I guess I didn't offer any competition to him, so he was very friendly to me, and we shared lots of trips together, rather official or unofficial, all

around the area, and he always told me everything he could about the history of the area.

Of course, after these river trips, he used *my* pictures extensively in his books, the pictures I'd taken on the trips. Well, he helped [research] write this book on Lee's Ferry that I authored. ~~Well, I wrote most of it, but he did some of the research on it, too.~~ You know, he was a very nice guy to me. I think he had trouble with some of the other professors at the university because he was *demanding* his rights as the senior professor of history there at the American West Center.

Storey: That's at the University of Utah, I believe.

Rusho: University of Utah. Right.

Storey: Well, that's typical. Historians want to tell the other historians how to do their job. (laughter)

Rusho: Yeah. Oh, yeah. But he had persuasive qualities. He was given the contract which was actually paid for by the Bureau of Reclamation and administered by the National Park Service to investigate the history of Glen Canyon before it was covered by Lake Powell.

Storey: And was there a publication that resulted?

Rusho: There were a number of publications. ~~The whole project was part of the—well,~~ It was a big contract that covered both archeology and history, and there were monographs written by the archeologists *and* by Crampton on various phases of it. I think there must have been at least a dozen

of these monographs, and I don't think they're in print anymore. They're kind of rare books. But they would have archeology on a certain section of the canyon in one monograph, or Crampton would write history of, say, from Hanson Creek down to the confluence with the San Juan, and *all* of the historic sites would be listed with photographs and what he knew about them and was able to find out about them.

Rusho and Crampton Work on the San Juan River

So when he came to me and said, well, he hadn't done the San Juan River, could we possibly arrange something, so I talked to the regional director, Frank [M.] Clinton, and Frank said, "Well, maybe we can do something like that," and Crampton came in and talked to him and was able to persuade him to send me and a regional photographer and Crampton, all at Bureau expense, down the San Juan River. Then the next year we did the same thing in Cataract Canyon in the upper part of Lake Powell, very fine trips, excellent.

Storey: How long did they take?

Rusho: About ten days on each one.

Storey: Moving down slowly, I take it.

Rusho: Slowly, stopping at every inscription on the rock and anything interesting historically, an old building, a mining claim, whatever.

Storey: Did you have a guide?

Rusho: Well, Crampton was the guide, because he investigated everything in advance and he *knew* about where things were, and he'd contacted people and they'd described where an inscription was or something like—

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. JUNE 26, 1995.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. JUNE 26, 1995.

Rusho: About three months before Greg died, he talked to him about this investigation in Glen Canyon.

Jay Haymond

Storey: Jay Haymond did.

Rusho: Jay did, and had it transcribed and sent the copy to Greg for corrections, but Greg, by this time, was in such bad condition that he really didn't have the energy to correct it. I've got to call Jay and find out what's the status. Did he get it back? Did anybody look at it?

Storey: You were talking about going down and spending ten days on the trips as you went down the San Juan and in Cataract Canyon, I believe.

Rusho: Yes, '62 and '63.

Storey: That would have been fascinating, I would think.

Rusho: Well, it really was, because [it was the best trip.] ~~it's the only time—~~ I've been through Cataract again with some fish biologists and looked for some of these inscriptions that we had seen in '63, and couldn't find them. But Crampton knew

where they were and he could describe, "This is where John Wesley Powell camped, and this is the side canyon that Powell and his men walked up, and this is where the Best expedition had a big wreck," you know. We learned a lot on that trip.

Storey: Yeah, that must have been interesting. I believe Alex Krieger was the archeologist. Am I thinking correctly?

Rusho: That name sounds familiar, but Jess Jennings was the—

Jessie Jennings and Glen Canyon Archaeology

Storey: Oh, I'm sorry. Jessie Jennings, yes. Tell me about Jess Jennings and anything you had to do with him, if you would.

Rusho: Well, I really had very little to do with Jess Jennings, because he was handling archeology and I was primarily interested in history. I met Jess a few times. I met some of the people who worked with him—Lloyd Pearson, for instance, from Moab. ~~I worked also—you see,~~ The University of Utah [investigated] ~~had~~ only the mainstem of the Colorado and all the way from the upper part of the lake down to Glen Canyon, but they didn't have the south shore. They didn't have the San Juan or the south shore down to the dam, if you understand what I mean.

Museum of Northern Arizona Archaeology Work for Glen Canyon

The San Juan and the south shore were taken care of by the Museum of Northern Arizona, who did the archeological work, but Crampton did the history on everything, no matter where it was. ;
~~but the archeology on that part was the Museum of Northern Arizona.~~ I worked with Alex Lindsay [phonetic] and Christy Turner a bit on that.

Storey: Tell me about—

Rusho: But Jennings was—I could only get second-hand impressions of him, a kind of imperious guy [who] ~~that~~ felt that he was God's gift to archeology. There's no denying he really knew his subject quite well.

Lloyd Pierson

Storey: What about Lloyd Pierson? Do you have any impressions of him?

Rusho: Well, I worked with Lloyd a little bit in later years and got to know him more than I did in those days. I only met Lloyd in 1958 or '60, something like that, and later, after he retired, living in Moab, I worked with him on getting castings of an inscription over there, for instance, and he helped me do that, and found him to be a very nice, cooperative guy, an interesting fellow, knowledgeable. He really knows that country and the people there.

Storey: What about the people from the Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff?

Rusho: Well, at that time they were under the direction of Ned Danson, D-A-N-S-O-N. Danson ~~was a well,~~ ~~he~~ cooperated with us very well, extensively, and his archeologists were always generous with me and very cooperative. Never had any problem at all.

Dinosaur Tracks at Glen Canyon Dam

There was one time when we discovered some dinosaur tracks right below the dam in a thin lens of limestone, and I told Wylie that I thought we ought to call the geologist at the Museum of Northern Arizona to come look at those, and he says, "You keep those bastards out of here." He didn't want anybody coming around trying to stop his work. So the dinosaur [tracks] went into ~~the~~ dust. Well, there might have been a lot more, but I thought they were kind of interesting.

Storey: Yeah, very interesting. In your public affairs work, I gather you must have run into people like the Sierra Club and the people who were opposed to construction of the dam, or did they stay away from us?

Rainbow Bridge Tour by Stewart Udall

Rusho: They generally stayed away from direct contact unless there was some occasion that brought us together, like the time when Stewart Udall organized a helicopter trip of dignitaries and newsmen into Rainbow Bridge, because he wanted to expand Rainbow Bridge into a big national park that would encompass Navajo

Mountain and some other area around there. So this was '62, I'm pretty sure. We had the Army bringing in big helicopters and there were some small helicopters and Sierra Club was represented, Wildlife–Wilderness Society, I should say, and other organizations, as well as congressmen like Frank Moss was there, Dave Brower from the Sierra Club was there, and we all helicoptered into Rainbow Bridge and followed Udall around. I had occasion to talk to Brower a little bit, but he was very condescending toward me. I was just a poor government employee who didn't know any better. So I didn't have much conversation at that time.

Ken Sleight Opposed Raising Water under Rainbow Bridge

Occasionally I would meet people like Ken Sleight, who had his own river-running [company], and he and I got along very well. He was one of those who sued the government over the flooding of Rainbow Bridge in 1972, and said that it was totally against the law to flood that area, because the law said that no water will cover any national monument. That was part of the law authorizing the Colorado River Storage Project.

Storey: And Rainbow Bridge was a national monument, as I recall.

Work Involved in Protecting Rainbow Bridge from the Rising Waters of Lake Powell

Rusho: Yes, it was 160 acres that was completely surrounded by Navajo reservation, but it was a

national monument, and that was part of the compromise that was worked out in '56 over the [proposal to build] ~~flooding of the possible building of Echo Dam, Echo Park Dam.~~ This compromise said that, all right, we won't have any water on any national monuments. Well, I think the Bureau of Reclamation maybe forgot about Rainbow Bridge. So Reclamation, after they started building Glen Canyon Dam, they realized that they were going to flood part of a national monument, so they had surveyors and engineers and other specialists going up there to figure out how we could keep the water [out] ~~off~~ of Rainbow Bridge National Monument by building dams to keep Lake Powell from backing into it and *then* to keep the *runoff* that came down off Navajo Mountain to go *around* the national monument and into Lake Powell some way. It would have been a horrendous, elaborate construction *mess*.

So the Bureau just kept telling Congress, "We're obligated to ask for money. It's going to be awful, but we're obligated to do this. So you want to give us some money to build these things?" And Congress kept saying no. For nine years, Congress said, "No, we aren't going to give you any money to do that."

So then when the water started backing [up,] ~~in,~~ the Wasatch Mountain Club and Ken Sleight and ~~somebody else,~~ Friends of the Earth, filed this suit saying, "You can't flood that because the law says you can't flood it."

Well, it got to the district court, and the district court said, "No, you can't." ~~And got to the~~

appeals court and they said, "That's right, you can't flood it." Or, no, The appeals court[, however,] said that ~~what has happened~~ by denying funds Congress has effectively changed the law, that the law no longer exists that you had to keep water out of it, which, to me, was legislation by judicial action. I don't think that's right. Congress should have had the will and should have undertaken to change the law if they didn't want water on there. But anyway, the Supreme Court refused to review it, so ~~the law stands—I mean,~~ the decision stands.

Storey: But now don't I recall that you have to walk quite a ways to get to Rainbow Bridge?

Rusho: No, no.

Storey: Half a mile or something?

Rusho: Not anymore. Well, the only reason you have to walk is because the Park Service has put the dock down half a mile from the bridge, and then you walk across a floating bridge which crosses that thin arm of the lake. Then you walk up under the bridge. But there's water. There's Lake Powell right under the bridge.

Storey: Oh, okay. I misunderstood what was going on, I guess.

Rusho: Yeah, there's water.

Storey: Didn't a situation like that put you in a pretty difficult position as a public affairs officer?

Rusho: No, not really, because I could simply tell them what I told you, that Congress has refused to appropriate funds and we keep asking for it, and there's nothing more we can do.

Storey: But the way you tell the story, it sounds as if Reclamation wasn't really asking for funds. They were doing it in a way that was—

Rusho: I didn't point that out to the newsmen, of course. (laughter)

Storey: Okay.

Rusho: Although I knew it. But Reclamation *and* Udall both were simply saying, “We have to ask for this, but we don't want it.”

Storey: When you were traveling with Udall and Brower and party, was [Floyd] Dominy there?

Stewart Udall and the Colorado River Storage Project

Rusho: *No*, Dominy was not there. ~~I think this might have been the—well,~~ I don't *really* know what was going on between Dominy and Udall at that time. That was a much higher level than I was exposed to. I don't think that Dominy and Udall ever became close friends by any means, or philosophical associates. (laughter) Udall's philosophy on Glen Canyon changed dramatically over the years. He was a great proponent of this Colorado River Storage Project in '56, and doing this dramatic thing of putting sandstone in the glass of water and drinking it to show that the

rock did not dissolve like some people had said. ~~and so~~ He really pushed for it, and he really liked it, but I think the more he visited Glen Canyon and saw Rainbow Bridge and all these other natural features of the area, the more he thought that it probably wasn't such a good idea to flood that canyon.

Storey: So he was down there more than once, then.

Rusho: Oh, yes. He came at times with various congressmen. I can remember at least a couple of times he was there.

Storey: What was your impression of Stewart Udall?

Rusho: I liked Udall. I thought he had a quick wit, a good grasp of the situation, and I think he made friends easily. He was not a condescending person. He always treated employees with respect, I thought. I would have been glad to work for Udall.

Storey: How many times do you suppose he was down there, that you can recall?

Rusho: Well, I know he was there for the Rainbow Bridge trip I mentioned. He was there for the dedication of the dam in 1966. I think he was there for at least one other occasion with a group of congressmen, maybe a committee doing a quick inspection. There may have been several other occasions, too, where I didn't have any contact with him.

David Brower

Storey: I gather Brower came across as sort of aloof . . .

Rusho: Oh, he did, yeah, particularly toward Reclamation employees, because I'm sure he felt that we were all enemies, but he didn't have to share his philosophy with *us*, because we weren't going to buy it anyway.

Storey: What about Floyd Dominy? My recollection is that he told me that he was at Glen Canyon, flew to—I've forgotten the name of the town up in northwest New Mexico.

Rusho: Farmington?

Storey: Farmington. Flew to Farmington and was there informed that he had been announced as commissioner by President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower. Do you remember *him* around the dam and the construction site?

Floyd Dominy

Rusho: Oh yes. He was there frequently. He came in and out and frequently would just drop in and see Wylie, and the two of them would go on a little trip down to the dam, do an inspection.

Dominy came in one time with about six congressmen, and, God, Dominy was a master at working a group of people. He had them staying in the Merritt, Chapman, and Scott Guest House, the MCS Guest House, and it was a very nice place. I was over there. I remember I was asked to tend bar, mix drinks for them, so I did that, and I watched Dominy. I don't think I ever saw him

talk business about Reclamation or what we ought to do or anything. Mainly they told dirty jokes and *laughed* a lot, and a lot of back-slapping and stories and this sort of thing. We took them on a tour of the dam, under construction then, and they would throw rocks and just have a gay old time, and hardly ever talked business. That would seem to be his way of getting congressmen on his side. He became their *friend*. And, *that*, to him, was far more important than convincing them of a particular policy that he wanted. That was easy after they became his friend. But he was very good at this, and he could do it even when he was really soused with alcohol. He always had a jug of Jim Beam in a briefcase and [would] dip into it frequently, but he got so he could pull it off that even when he was quite drunk, you never knew it.

Dominy's Long-term Friends in Congress Left for Various Reasons

His problem came both from the drinking and from the fact that his long-term *friends* in Congress simply died off, like Carl Hayden, Wayne Aspinall, people like that lost power, and he didn't have other friends. The new people that came in were really suspicious of him, and when they found that he drank a lot, when they found that he courted the favors of women in various places, why, they simply refused to go along with any further projects that he had. For instance, the dams in Grand Canyon.

Storey: For instance, there are a lot of stories about him playing poker with congressmen and all that kind of thing. Did you see anything like that?

Rusho: Oh, yeah. Yeah, and that was part of this same process that I was telling you, make *friends* with the congressmen, play poker with them, have drinks, tell jokes, all this kind of thing, and stress *that* far above discussing policy.

Storey: You actually saw him sit down to cards, for instance?

Rusho: Well, I don't recall actually card games, but—

Storey: But a lot of drinking.

Rusho: Lots of drinking and telling stories.

Storey: And friendly activity, interaction.

Rusho: Oh, yeah, yeah. I'm sure there were card games, too.

Storey: Did you ever go out on tours of the canyon or anything with him?

Rusho: No, no, I didn't, not up the canyon or anything like that.

Storey: And you weren't on this famous trip with he and Brower, for instance?

Rusho: Oh, no, down in the Grand Canyon, no. No, *Travels with the Archdruid*.

Storey: How did he deal with staff?

Rusho: Dominy?

Storey: Yes.

**“I didn't want to have a direct contact with Dominy
if I could avoid it . . .”**

Rusho: That I can't tell you very much, because the only interaction I had was through Wylie, and then after I came here, through the regional director. I got so I was very suspicious. I didn't want to have a direct contact with Dominy if I could avoid it, because he was the kind of person that he would treat his employees well if they were doing what he wanted them to, but if they made a mistake, he was liable to turn on them like a viper and, you know, just transfer them somewhere or fire them if he could, or whatever.

Storey: So it was safer just to stay away, is what I'm hearing.

Rusho: I just felt it was much better to stay away from him and not attract his attention if I could avoid it.

Storey: And who was the regional director then?

Eugene Oliver (Ollie) Larson

Rusho: Well, we went through a number of regional directors. Let's see. When I was at Glen Canyon, it was E.O. Larson, Eugene Oliver Larson, named “Ollie,” what we called him. Ollie was the guy who was in charge of actually planning the C-R-S-P. When the whole project was planned, it was Ollie and his geologists and engineers who

planned where the dams would be and how big they would be and all of this thing.

Planning for the Colorado River Storage Project

- Storey: Larson with an S-E-N or S-O-N?
- Rusho: S-O-N. Well, he was a great guy and I wish I had interviewed him before he died, and gotten some more stories on how the C-R-S-P was authorized on such a fragmentary bunch of information that they had. Compared to what they did later, and probably still do if there was any projects to build, this highly extensive investigation taking years, environmental impact statements and the whole gamut of reports that we have to go through, geology reports and cost benefit analysis and everything like that, they didn't do that on CRSP. They simply sent their engineers and geologists out and did a quick reconnaissance and came up with a plan, and they sent that plan right to Congress.
- Storey: Of course, now let's see. If I'm thinking correctly, that included Echo Park?
- Rusho: Yes.
- Storey: And included Marble Canyon and Bridge Canyon?
- Rusho: Marble is Lower Basin.
- Storey: It's a different thing. CRSP is on the Upper Basin?

Rusho: No, Bridge is Lower Basin.

Storey: But I'm saying CRSP was Upper Basin only?

Rusho: Oh, yeah.

Storey: I guess I had never realized that before.

Purposes of Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell

Rusho: Yeah, and Glen Canyon is at the very *bottom* of the Upper Basin, and its only purpose was to—well, it has two purposes. One purpose is to supply water in measured amounts past Lee's Ferry, which is the dividing point. Of course, you need Lake Powell to do that because of the erratic nature of the Colorado River, and to supply a subsidy through power revenues to the building of all these participating projects, Silt, and Central Utah, and so forth.

How did we get on that subject?

Storey: We were talking about Ollie Larson.

The Colorado River Storage Project Had Multiple Features Which Had Specialized Purposes

Rusho: Oh, yeah. Anyway, they got this concept through. I think the concept had been originated in the Missouri River Basin, of building a multi-feature project where you have one unit [that] takes care of storage and another unit [that] takes care of power and other units [that] actually irrigate, but they all share the revenue. ~~and that sort of thing.~~ This was what happened in the Colorado River

Storage Project [CRSP]. It was a very ingenious idea, I think, to do that, Glen Canyon being the cash register of the Colorado River Storage Project.

Storey: And Larson was at the center of all of this?

Rusho: Oh, yeah, Larson was. He actually took a back seat in some of the hearings, and a fellow named Cecil Jacobsen, who still lives here in town, as a matter of fact, was the engineer in charge of testifying before Congress on the need for Echo Park.

Storey: He was a Reclamation employee?

Rusho: Yeah. Cecil Jacobsen.

Storey: S-E-N or O-N?

Rusho: S-E-N. Jacobsen was the one who made the mistake in evaporation data that was caught by Dave Brower.

Storey: And, Grant. General Grant. (laughter)

Rusho: Yes, that's right. And so, you know, I've talked to Jake later and he defends himself, and he says he [was] misinterpreted, ~~it~~, but it was interpreted by Congress as a mistake by Reclamation, [and it] ~~but~~ helped defeat the Echo Park proposal.

Storey: There was a lot of to-do about that in the papers when I was reading through them, I noticed.

- Rusho: Yeah. And a lot of people make the mistake of assuming that Glen Canyon was a substitute for Echo Park, which was absolutely not the case at all.
- Storey: Well, I understood it was sort of, “We'll let go of Echo Park if you'll agree not to fight Glen Canyon” kind of thing.
- Rusho: That may have been behind the scenes. That was not written out. I *heard* Dave Brower talk, and he said that his whole emphasis was on Echo Park, and once he had defeated Echo Park, he felt that there was no problem, no further problem with the projects that were proposed. He didn't know anything about Glen Canyon, never been through there.
- Storey: It was an unknown commodity, if you will, an unknown property.
- Rusho: That's why when they finally did get in there, Sierra Club got into Glen Canyon, ~~made a couple of trips~~, made *several* trips down in '61 and '62, they came out with this book called *The Place No One Knew*, but, of course, some people *did* know about it. The Sierra Club didn't know; that was the main thing.
- Storey: Did Ollie Larson come out to Glen Canyon much?
- Rusho: No, no. He didn't.
- Storey: Was he the regional director then?

Lem Wylie Didn't like the Regional Office

Rusho: No, ~~he was regional director. There was a great~~—well, I say Lem Wylie had no love for the regional office *at all*. He felt that every time the regional office contacted him, it was some form of interference. His whole loyalty and anything he looked for was from Denver, the engineering office.

Storey: From the chief of engineers.

Rusho: Chief engineer.

Storey: Who at that time would have been—that's the wrong list. Who would have been prior to [B.P.] Bellport, wouldn't it? Maybe Grant Bloodgood and Barney Bellport?

Louis Puls, Concrete Dam Section

Rusho: And Barney Bellport, yeah, and he looked to them and Louis Puls, P-U-L-S. I don't know whether Louis is still around. He was the head of [the] concrete dam section in Denver.

Storey: In Denver.

Rusho: Yes. Louis Puls was *the* man that Wylie said was the authority on building Glen Canyon Dam. *Those* were the people he took direction from willingly, but when Ollie Larson and people like that would call from the regional office, it was just “Those damn bastards want to do something again,” you know. “Wish they'd get off my back and forget about this project.” I don't know how

much of that continued later, but it was certainly strong in Wylie.

Storey: Did you see Grant Bloodgood out here or Barney Bellport?

Rusho: I don't remember Bloodgood ever coming to the dam, but, let's see, Bellport did. Yeah.

How are we doing?

Storey: We're doing fine.

Rusho: Okay. Bellport came to the dam occasionally.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. JUNE 26, 1995.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. JUNE 26, 1995.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Bud Rusho on June the 26th, 1995.

[You were talking] about Mr. Wylie's reaction to the regional office and then about Barney Bellport and the project, I believe.

Rusho: Yes, yes. When Bellport or Louis Puls or any of the other officials concerned with design and construction of the dam would visit, Wylie was submissive and happy to see them, but when the regional office people came down, it was a matter of he tolerated them and that's all.

Storey: Do you think that was typical of Reclamation at that time?

Rusho: I think it was, although it was probably exaggerated in Wylie because of his particular philosophy, his military view of things. He didn't like a divided head over him. He felt that there ought to be just *one* boss, and that's it.

Storey: And it was going to be the chief engineer.
(laughter)

Rusho: Right. (laughter)

Storey: Was he an engineer?

Rusho: Oh, yes. Yeah, Wylie was a civil engineer.

Storey: Did you ever meet Bellport?

Rusho: I met him.

Storey: Or Louis Puls?

Rusho: I met with Louis. It was simply a matter that I was on the staff of Wylie, so I was *introduced* to them and they would say hello to me, but we had no conversations.

Storey: What's your impression of Bellport?

**Many Reclamation Engineers Did Not Understand
or Tolerate Public Opinion Opposed to Projects**

Rusho: I really can't say very much, because I really didn't know him that well. Probably a competent engineer, but I think he was probably intolerant of public opinion, like so many in Denver in those days, and Wylie was, too. "The public is getting a

benefit of a wonderful thing that we're doing, so why should they interfere in any way?"

Storey: That was the attitude?

Rusho: Yeah, it really was.

Storey: Now let's see. Glen Canyon. You said the dedication was when? '66?

Rusho: It was September of '66. I'm not sure of the exact day.

Storey: So it was before or right at the beginning of the environmental legislation. National Historic Preservation Act was passed in '66, National Environmental Policy Act in '69.

Rusho: Wilderness Act in '64.

Storey: Wilderness Act is a little earlier in there.

Rusho: Right in the middle. We're beginning the swing there, you're right, in the mid-sixties.

Storey: How was that coming to your office at Glen Canyon? Was it?

Rusho: Well, I wasn't there then; I was up here.

Storey: You'd already moved?

Rusho: '63, I moved.

Storey: Oh, okay. How was it affecting you here in the regional office then? How were you seeing it manifested?

Rusho: Well, let's see. The engineers were antagonistic towards it. This movement toward the environment was occurring in those days, and they were pushing for more investigation of projects before they were constructed, and suspicion that maybe everything Reclamation had done was not perfect, ~~you know, this~~ was becoming more manifest in public attitudes. I would say not in the mid-sixties as much as the later sixties and in the early seventies, when we had people like Ellis Armstrong, who would go around saying that, "The public just doesn't realize how great the engineers are, that we can fix everything. Anything they don't like about the world, us engineers will fix it. Just give us the tools and the money." So there was bitterness.

"There was increasing bitterness in Reclamation, particularly in the complications that slowed down the authorization and construction of projects, so many hoops to jump through to get to a project . . ."

There was increasing bitterness in Reclamation, particularly in the complications that slowed down the authorization and construction of projects, so many hoops to jump through to get to a project.

Storey: As a matter of fact, I think the last major authorization occurred before 1970. There were minor authorizations. When was CUP authorized, for instance?

Rusho: Well, CUP actually was authorized in '56 as part of the C-R-S-P.

Storey: See, a lot of things were done that way and we're still finishing up those sort of long-term authorizations.

Rusho: Yeah. The Colorado River Basin [Project] Act of 1968, that authorized additional projects in the Upper Basin and also in the Lower Basin.

Storey: Maybe CAP was at that time or a little before?

Rusho: I think CAP was part of that act, '68.

Storey: We've started on this line of the engineers reacting to the environmental movement. I'm sort of torn, but I think maybe what we ought to do is pursue that clear through to your retirement, if we may, and then drop back to Glen Canyon again.

Rusho: Okay. All right.

Storey: Could you talk about the way the environmental acts and so on began to build up and the way Reclamation reacted to them as you were watching through the years?

**“My God, they aren't doing anything. . . .
Reclamation isn't building anything anymore and
it's all been taken over by the biologists and
archeologists.”**

Rusho: Well, I would say that the engineers in Reclamation have *never* fully accepted the need for the environmental investigation that NEPA

requires, but it was forced upon them little by little. Nobody realized what NEPA required when it first came out. I remember the environmental impact statement for Crystal Dam was, I think, three pages. They figured, "Well, that's plenty."

You know, at that time we finally had to hire an environmental specialist around 1972. That was the first one. The need for other specialists in the environmental field just became gradually felt, need for biologist, for archeologist, for a historian occasionally. I remember thinking, around 1970, "I wonder why Reclamation doesn't hire a fish biologist? Why do we have to depend on somebody else?" Well, it wasn't very long before other people saw that, too, and we had to bring all these people in.

Now I think the engineers feel that the environmental movement has rather taken over Reclamation, that the original intent of Reclamation was to build dams and canals and features, and that's become rather secondary to environmental protection. [I've] † talk to some of the retired Reclamation people. We have a meeting about every month during the winter months, and they are still bitter about it. They look at the newsletter that comes out from Reclamation, and they say, "My God, they aren't doing anything. ~~The personnel news,~~ The social news and the personnel news, that's all we get, because Reclamation isn't building anything anymore and it's all been taken over by the biologists and archeologists. ~~and things like that.~~" So you probably notice some of that yourself.

Storey: You know, it's a major transition from being one of the sort of premier civil engineering organizations in the world, *building* things, to a situation where we're now in O&M, with very little real construction going on.

Rusho: And I think a large part of that is the lack of esteem that the engineers feel, that the change from, say, the fifties, when I started with Reclamation, where the engineers felt that they were *really* contributing toward the building up of America and its economy and its standard of living, and that they were some of the kingpins in the world, that people looked up to them, and now they don't have that lofty position anymore. They're looked upon with suspicion, that all they want to do is make work projects for themselves and destroy things.

Storey: Yeah, I think there is a lot of that. Going back to Glen Canyon, you were there '58 to '63?

Rusho: Yes.

Storey: For five years.

Rusho: Five years.

Storey: Who were some of the other kinds of personalities that came through there?

Rusho: As visitors?

Storey: Yeah, or as inspecting the work, you know, Reclamation folks.

Famous Visitors to Glen Canyon

Rusho: Well, we had a lot of newsmen, of course, come through there, of various types, photographers, TV people. Charles Kuralt came through and did an "On the Road" trip there. We had a few famous photographers like one of the Weston boys. Brett Weston came through, son of Edward Weston. I took him around the dam. Let's see.

Storey: Tell me more about them, Kuralt and Weston.

Rusho: Well, you know, those were brief visits, each one of them. I remember Charles Kuralt came in and he had a crew with him, and we took him around. He would do little interviews with some construction people and describe this wonderful thing. It was all a very favorable thing at the time.

I remember Brett Weston came in using an old Graphlex camera, but he was interested in abstracts. He didn't care about the dam. He would look at the cliff and the desert patina on the cliffs and talk about abstracts, take a picture of this part of the cliff and look at this wonderful abstract we'd get off of that.

Of course, we had children come through, various school groups would make trips, and we'd take them around. We had a *lot* of trips by water-user organizations. The Colorado River Commission would send people down, sometimes thirty or forty people. We'd take a couple of busloads of people around. All the people from

Arizona, from California, water-user groups, a lot of them came through.

Storey: These would have been groups that would receive water downstream ultimately?

Rusho: Yes, and groups that were simply interested either in the engineering aspects of the dam itself or in development of Colorado River as such.

Storey: This would have been an era when water development still was something to be done, something that was supported broadly.

Rusho: Yes, yes it was, broadly meaning the whole United States, or at least all the West, was behind the water projects. This, I think, has kind of fragmented into little areas of support rather than a broad support now. I think that if you go into rural Utah, you will still find very strong support for water projects. Maybe that's true in rural Colorado. But the urban areas are much less so because of the environmental movement. ~~and the [unclear] and that sort of thing.~~

Storey: Do you remember any particular situations where you had to arrange tours and so on?

Rusho: Oh, yes.

Storey: Sort of highlights?

Rusho: Yes, I've arranged tours for the Colorado Water Board from Denver. A lot of people would simply use Glen Canyon as a neat place to go see, flying down in a plane. ~~, and there, [We would]~~

pick them up, take them on a bus tour, give them lunch, maybe [provide] a talk by Wylie or one of the other engineers, and then they'd take them back to the plane and then they'd leave. Or they'd come in in a bus and we'd take them around.

The Navajos would come in. The Navajo Tribal Council would come over, and we'd take them around. They were quite interested. Of course, the dam was built half on Navajo reservation. Of course, we traded them land for it and they agreed to it, but they didn't like it. Particularly the people that got displaced didn't like it a bit.

Storey: So they were living down in the canyon?

Navajo Didn't Like Begin Relocated

Rusho: There were a few, just a few. That was a sparsely populated part of the reservation, but there were Navajos in, say, Piute Canyon on the San Juan, there were some hogans up there and other places. A lot of the Navajos would come down into Glen Canyon with their sheep and water their sheep. [There were] ~~Had~~ a few access points where you *could* get down. ~~Some of them were displaced and they didn't like it.~~ They didn't like to go to McCracken Mesa, which was the area that they received in exchange.

Storey: Did the Navajo assert any claim to the hydro revenues or anything like that?

Rusho: No, no, they couldn't do that. ~~I guess—let's see.~~ The thing that was given to them in the Colorado

River Storage Project was the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, and that was always held up to them as their share of the C-R-S-P. Of course, Clinton Anderson, senator from New Mexico, insisted that Navajo Dam, ~~which~~ was simply built as a storage reservoir for the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, the NIIP, but he insisted that Navajo Dam be [considered] a storage project, so that the costs could be less for that area, for that project.

Storey: That would be N-I-I-P.

Rusho: N-I-I-P. That, of course, is still under development, as I understand. They haven't completely finished all of the agricultural development yet.

Storey: Did you have any trouble with the Navajo over Glen Canyon at an official level, at the tribal level, that you recall?

Rusho: There might have been some, but they didn't impact on public affairs. There might have been some between *Wylie and them, because I know he* occasionally had to go to Window Rock to talk to them, and some of them would come up and talk to him.

Storey: How did he move around when he had to travel?

Rusho: Well, he would simply charter a plane. We didn't have a Bureau plane, but he would usually fly out on a charter plane, usually a Cessna, just a small plane.

Storey: From Page?

Rusho: From Page, yeah.

Storey: We had our own airport?

Rusho: Oh, yeah, Page Airport was built in '57.

Storey: And so when he had to travel, that's the way he did it. Did you ever have to go anywhere like to Washington for testimony or anything?

Rusho: Well, I didn't have to go and talk to Congress, but I would go to conferences occasionally in Washington. I came to the regional office occasionally, went to Denver office once in *a while, mainly on public affairs* conferences. When I got involved in making motion pictures, then we would confer on scripts and that sort of thing. I remember going to Denver to film the *model* of Glen Canyon that was built, and show the engineers working on it, just trying to trace how the dam developed.

Storey: How would you travel when you had to go somewhere from Glen Canyon?

Rusho: ~~Well, generally I would=~~ Up until '59, we didn't have commercial travel out of Page, commercial air, but in '59, a commercial airline started there with service to Phoenix and Salt Lake. So from '59 on, I always traveled commercial airlines. Usually if I had to travel—say at one time I had to go to Farmington for something—I can't even remember what, but charter a plane, fly over there.

Storey: What was social life like in Page when it was a Reclamation construction camp?

Social Life in Page During Construction

Rusho: Well, you had two divisions of social groups at Page. Well, maybe more than two, but there were two *main* ones, and that was the contractors' group, they had about 900 trailers in a *big*, big trailer park, and they stayed pretty much to themselves. Then the Reclamation group, who primarily lived in these 200 homes, would socialize. I had three and then four little children at the time, and I was not inclined to go around and visit other people a lot. We stayed home because we had these little kids to take care of.

But there was considerable pressure, as there are probably in most little towns, to belong and participate in anything that's going on. ~~, you know, you participate.~~ They started the country club there, and ~~I remember~~ I was *not* particularly interested in that country club. [But,] I always felt that there were a lot of people that thought I should have been. What kind of a public affairs officer is this who won't even join our country club? ~~Because there was that kind of=~~ You didn't really feel that you were free to do what you wanted to do, because it was such a small town. Everybody knew what everybody else was doing. In that respect, I didn't like it too well, but I did get along with everybody quite well. I had a lot of good friends. Reclamation did employ a high caliber of people, really some very fine individuals.

Storey: Was there a lot of difference between people hired by Reclamation and people hired by the construction companies, the contractors?

Rusho: I would say in the management level of the contractor, no, they were very similar. In fact, they did participate with Reclamation groups. It was the workers of the construction company who had their own social groupings.

Storey: What kinds of activities went on besides the country club?

Rusho: Well, they had a swimming pool group, they had *lots* of different church groups that most everybody belonged to. What other groups were there? I hadn't even thought about that for years. But there were quite a number of different groupings of people that would get together occasionally.

Storey: If you had a bunch of little kids, what were the schools like?

Schools in Page and Service on the School Board

Rusho: Well, the schools weren't too bad, really, and the kids liked them, really did. The buildings at that time were, I think, rather temporary-type buildings, but they had adequate number of teachers, their classes weren't too crowded. In fact, I was [a member of] ~~elected on~~ the school board for a while there, and we had a little trouble with some of ~~the-you-know~~, the personnel problems you have with teachers. I remember we

had to kick one teacher out. But generally speaking, it was a pretty well-run organization.

Storey: You had to kick a teacher out?

Rusho: Well, the details are too hazy for me to really get explicit about what was going on there, but I recall that we had one teacher that didn't get along with the other teachers and may have been abusive to some of the children.

Storey: Did Reclamation run the schools?

Rusho: No, Coconino County ran the schools.

Storey: So they were county schools, even though it was a Reclamation town.

Rusho: Yes.

Storey: Did Reclamation become involved in any of that in any way?

Rusho: Not as an agency. As individuals, yes, but not as an agency. The only way they would have been involved would have been in laying out the location of the schools and developing the buildings, because [Page] Reclamation was entirely Bureau-owned at that time. Nobody owned any land there except the Bureau.

~~Storey: Page was.~~

~~Rusho: Page was, I should say.~~

Storey: Okay. How did you get involved in the school board?

Rusho: Well, I don't recall. It's simply that I probably was a friend of somebody on the board, and, like, the druggist Mack Ward, was a good friend of mine, he was on the board, and he probably just recommended me. ~~, so I was—I don't even know whether I was elected.~~ I think I was appointed.

Move to Salt Lake City

Storey: If I'm understanding this, you moved to Salt Lake a couple of years before the dedication of the dam?

Rusho: Yes. See, the concrete of the dam was completed, the last bucket was in 1963, September, and they completed the powerplant in 1964, but by that time the public interest, through the media, the reporters and so forth, had declined tremendously, because they figured the dam is finished. So there was really no great need for a full-time public affairs officer there. They kept the photographer on for a year or two, but they simply said, "Well, you can either move or be fired. Move to Salt Lake and we've got a job for you or you'll get a RIF down there." So I decided, without any other prospects, I'd better move to Salt Lake.

Storey: That would have been '62?

Rusho: It would have been October of '63.

Storey: Did you continue to handle Glen Canyon from up here?

Worked on Design of the Visitors' Center at Glen Canyon Dam

Rusho: A lot of it, yes. The public affairs officer here, Herb Simison, handled some of it, too, but I was given a lot of authority on anything dealing with Glen Canyon. For instance, the design of the Visitor Center there, on the rim of the canyon, I was the one who worked primarily with the architect in Denver to develop the Visitor Center and figure out how many urinals you need in the rest room and little things like that, how *big* the auditorium should be, how many people are we going to have at peak times, so I had quite a little to do with the Visitor Center.

Storey: Did you have a lot of this, sort of tourism visits to Glen Canyon while you were there? Not people there on official business, but people in their trusty mobile homes who wanted to see what was going on?

Supervised Guides at Glen Canyon Dam

Rusho: Oh, yeah. Well, I also had three or four guides who worked under my supervision, and their job was to accommodate the public. ~~, and they really didn't have~~—well, At one time we had a little Visitor Center by the bridge, just a temporary building, housing a few exhibits and a model showing the pictures of the construction, and the guides would take the visitors across the bridge. The bridge was the great viewpoint there for the construction of the dam, being 800 feet downstream, I think, something like that, and a good viewpoint. So the guides would go out and

just talk to individuals and explain what they were looking at.

Storey: A lot of visitors at that time?

Rusho: Oh, yes, particularly *after* the construction of the actual dam began in 1960. The first bucket was June 1960, and as the dam rose, then the pictures would be printed in the papers regionally—Denver, Salt Lake, Phoenix, and so forth—and it started to draw a lot of people who would come there just to see what the dam was doing. So we had no way of really counting them, but I would say many thousands came through. I still talk to people today who say, “Well, you know, I saw that dam when it was under construction.”

Storey: My impression is that a Visitors Center would have been fairly unusual for a Reclamation project. Do you think that's a correct sense?

Rusho: After completion?

Storey: That we would build one at all.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. JUNE 26, 1995.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. JANUARY 26, 1995.

Storey: I had just asked you whether or not a visitor center was unusual.

Rusho: No, visitor centers—well, they were unusual, but they had been done before. Shasta Dam, I believe, had a visitor center before Glen Canyon.

Storey: And Hoover, I think, had a little one perhaps.

Rusho: They had that little thing up on the dam. But Dominy wanted a nice visitor center at the dam, and he dictated that this Visitor Center would be *round* and it would overhang the canyon and would have a round room, a big round room, a rotunda kind of thing, and the architect in Denver hated the idea. He said you could build a building *so much* easier if you make it *square*, and so much cheaper and everything else, but Dominy insisted, and Dominy had gone before Congress saying, "It's going to be a round room overhanging the canyon," so that's what we got. And I'm glad we did. It turned out to be a very nice visitors' center.

Storey: The architect did well in spite of his misgivings, huh? (laughter)

Rusho: That's right.

Storey: Then did you have to put exhibits and things into it?

Rusho: Oh, yes, yes.

Storey: How did you go about that?

Rusho: Well, let's see. This was '67, and by then we had an agreement with the National Park Service that the Park Service would administer the building in conjunction with Reclamation, but they would actually staff it. So the Park Service *and* the Bureau got together to design exhibits, and I visited their offices. Primarily the Park Service built them and designed them with Reclamation input. I visited their offices in Santa Fe, I went to

their design office in San Francisco, and worked with the designers, and we came up with a number of exhibits which the Park Service built and put in.

The big model in the center of the rotunda there was a Reclamation concept that actually I had pushed. I said we ought to have that big model. Dominy liked the idea and the regional office liked it, and so we came up with a rough plan. In fact, I took a map and I said, "It ought to cover this area," and so we hired a model-maker to build it, and it took several months. I think the model-maker didn't make any money on it at all. ~~he bid so low, and~~ Yet it turned out to be a very nice model. That's still the centerpiece, although all the exhibits have been changed since the initial exhibits we put up.

Storey: I'd like to keep going, but unfortunately our two hours are up.

Rusho: Okay. Well, another time.

Storey: I'd like to ask you whether or not the cassette tapes and the transcripts from this interview can be used by researchers both inside and outside Reclamation.

Rusho: I have no objection.

Storey: Good. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. JUNE 26, 1995.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 1. JUNE 27, 1995.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, Senior Historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing W.L. "Bud" Rusho in the Bureau of Reclamation Regional Offices in Salt Lake City, Utah, at about one o'clock in the afternoon on June the 27th, 1995. This is tape one.

You were just telling me you had some thoughts since our discussion yesterday.

During Rusho's Tenure, Reclamation Was Focused Only on the Engineers in the Organization

Rusho: Well, yes. I think the Bureau, from the time I joined it in 1958, 'til the time I left in 1988, has changed a lot in regard to the way it treats the various professions among the Bureau personnel. When I joined, it was an engineering organization—period. The only emphasis on career development or anything else was for the engineers. Everybody else, including me, was simply a hired hand, hired to do a job as long as it was required and then throw them out. But the engineers had the career ladder and everything all established for them, and gradually this changed along with the emphasis toward environmental protection, starting around 1969, with NEPA, of course. Then they had to hire more and more of these non-engineers, biologists, public affairs people, historians even. ~~So now it is, I think=~~ It was getting to the point when I left that the other professions were recognized as carrying really the load of the Bureau of Reclamation, that the engineers, however much they disliked it, were *not* the prime focus of the Bureau's activities, and

we probably wouldn't even have a Bureau of Reclamation if it was strictly engineering today. But I recognized that public affairs people, for instance, like I was, [have] ~~had~~ a lot more recognition of their importance than they used to have.

Storey: Yeah. I think that's real obvious in the interviews that I do, too.

Rusho: I bet.

Storey: You get the older folks and the folks who came in in the sixties, then some in the seventies, and there's a different attitude about the professions and so on. I had a person [John W. Keys III] tell me recently that one of the prime—well, actually *the* prime qualification for being a regional director was, first, you had to be an engineer.

Rusho: Yes.

Storey: And I said, “Why would you have to be an engineer to be a regional director?” (laughter) And this person couldn't comprehend the question.

Rusho: You're going to calculate stresses on a bridge or on a dam as regional director? Of course not.

Storey: Yeah. You use the expertise of your engineering staff.

Rusho: So I think that's a very favorable sign. I like that.

Storey: One of the things that I was sort of trying to get at yesterday in our discussion had to do with the people who were opposed to the filling of Glen Canyon, the construction of Glen Canyon, and you had told me that the opponents, like the Sierra Club, *tended* to stay away, but I would think that there were groups that would sort of pick up on the stories and would be coming to the public affairs officer for information and so on. I was wondering if that was the case or not, or people tended to listen to one side or the other and not try and get a balanced story, or how that worked.

There Was No Agreement Between Reclamation and the Sierra Club about Echo Park and Glen Canyon Dams

Rusho: I think that it *was* pretty much a separation of opinions. I don't recall *ever* having a phone call from a Sierra Club representative when I was public affairs at Glen Canyon. I did here in the regional office. That was a little different, but during the construction, it was very much aloof. ~~and that's why when we were talking yesterday about the~~ You mentioned there was probably an agreement between the Sierra Club and the Bureau, they would *not* object to Glen Canyon Dam *if* Echo Park was deleted. I am almost certain that was not the case, because there was simply no communication.

Sierra Club and Dave Brower Didn't Even Think about Glen Canyon

Sierra Club felt, and Dave Brower in particular, that they had a victory, they had won, and that

was all they cared about. They didn't even *think* about Glen Canyon.

Dealing with the Negative Aspects of the Project at Glen Canyon Dam

- Storey: But what about media sources like newspapers and magazines and so on that might have been stimulated by this opposition? Did you get any inquiries from them?
- Rusho: Oh, yes, yes, there was some of that. The ordinary news reporters, like the newspapers from Phoenix and Salt Lake, would come there and they would try to bring in both sides of the question, but my role was not to tell them about Glen Canyon, the natural Glen Canyon. I told them about the dam, and then they would go elsewhere to learn about the canyon, although I probably knew more about the canyon than they realized because of my natural inclination and historical curiosity.
- Storey: Tell me about the way public affairs functions. It's always sort of fascinated me. If I were a newspaper reporter, it would seem to me I'd be coming in and sort of poking at the sides of what you were giving me, trying to get deeper into it. What about, "Reclamation wants to build a dam, but what about this lovely canyon behind it?" How do you deal with that kind of thing as a public affairs officer?
- Rusho: Well, you primarily emphasize the positive rather than say, "Yeah, it's too bad." You could say that, but then you would say, "But, look at all these

wonderful benefits that the dam is going to produce in the future.” In fact, I used to be [very] ~~so gung-ho. that reporters would even~~ I remember one reporter for the *Arizona Republic* [wrote] ~~remarked~~ that he had gone on a tour with me, in his article, and that such an enthusiastic public affairs officer he never saw before, because I would emphasize all these great things that the dam was going to do and why it was being built.

Storey: So you might admit that there might be some issues, but basically the approach is—

Rusho: Is positive.

Storey: —to emphasize the positive aspects of the project, in spite of the negative ones that may be there.

Rusho: Oh, yeah. You can't deny that a reservoir covers scenery, historic, archeological things, and I was aware of this from the very time I arrived there. The regional office had sent a photographer with a couple of the archeological expeditions to Glen Canyon, and I had reviewed all this footage that he had taken, so I was made aware pretty quickly that we were covering some pretty nice scenery with that lake.

But the strange thing about it was that although I could appreciate the qualities of ~~the lake—I mean, the river~~, ~~Glen Canyon has a river~~, and the scenery, the building of the dam was a separate compartment. I didn't hardly *relate* the two. Even until we closed the gates, ~~down there~~, it seemed that surely that beautiful canyon is not going to be covered. Actually, I knew it would

be, but it just didn't relate 'til all of a sudden it started to fill and somebody said, "You want to take a boat ride up the lake? It's pretty low, but we can see what there is to see," and we boated out. It was 1963, April, and the reservoir had been filling for a month. We boated over to the Crossing of the Fathers, where Dominguez Escalante had crossed in 1776, and they had cut steps for their horses, and these were *well-known*, very famous steps that they had cut, and we boated up there and the steps were half in and half out of the water. I was just crushed. I could hardly believe it. Gees, there it goes, 200 years of history into a watery oblivion.

Storey: That was before the National Historic Preservation Act and the other things.

Rusho: Oh, yes.

Dedication of Glen Canyon Dam

Storey: If I'm recalling our conversation yesterday, the dedication was actually a couple of years after you moved up to the Salt Lake office.

Rusho: Yes, yes, it was. It was handled by the regional public affairs staff, and Herb Simison was the principal person involved, although I assisted and went down and helped set up the photography platforms and that sort of thing. It was held on top of the dam with a platform there for Lady Bird Johnson, and Udall spoke, and I've forgotten who else.

Storey: I think Dominy and Brower spoke.

Rusho: Oh, was Brower there? I don't believe Brower was there.

Storey: Oh, he wasn't there?

Rusho: I don't think so. No, I don't think Brower ever had anything to celebrate about Glen Canyon Dam. (laughter) No, I'm sure he wouldn't.

Storey: But Lady Bird came out for this representing the president?

Rusho: Yeah, representing Lyndon Johnson. She had been out in 1964 for the dedication of Flaming Gorge, where I participated in the filming of it. I didn't arrange it, but I helped film it and record it, and then she came back ~~a year later~~, two years later, to do the Glen Canyon dedication.

Storey: So the Glen Canyon dedication then was in '66?

Rusho: '66, September.

Storey: So was it pretty full at that point?

Rusho: Well, no. The lake was low. It was a long ways down from the top of the dam to the lake, but it was still very pretty and blue, and we had boats circling around and around visibly from the dam so that would add to the background, and photographers were shooting upstream so that they could get these circling boats in the background as somebody spoke. Hot! It was a very pretty occasion.

- Storey: Why was it decided to do the dedication in '66? I guess the dam had been filling then for about three years.
- Rusho: Yes.
- Storey: It had been holding water for three years, maybe I should say.
- Rusho: Holding water. Well, the powerplant took a couple more years. The powerplant wasn't really completed until '65. In fact, there may have been even one unit come on the line in '66 of the eight units.
- Storey: So they waited until the powerplant was done, the dam was done, and so on.
- Rusho: Yes, and all the facilities were in, the roads, approach roads, and everything was fixed up very nicely.
- Storey: Do you remember anything else about the dedication?
- Rusho: Well, I don't believe so, that I haven't told you. Like you said, Udall spoke and Dominy spoke. Let's see. ~~No, I think—and it proceeded just fine.~~ We recorded it. There was no hitch in it at all. Lady Bird was very favorable to the building of the dam, of course.
- Storey: She served from arid West Texas.
- Rusho: Oh, yeah.

- Storey: West Central Texas.
- Rusho: She spoke about *her* Colorado River and our Colorado River.
- Storey: Two very different rivers. (laughter)
- Rusho: Right.
- Storey: What were you doing once you moved up to the regional office?
- Rusho: I was assisting the public affairs officer here.
- Storey: Herb Simison.
- Rusho: Herb Simison. And handling a lot of Glen Canyon activities. As I mentioned yesterday, I helped on the design of the Visitors Center. I participated—well, I had made a motion picture at Glen Canyon, made two of them, as a matter of fact. I made one in 1959, the first two years of construction of the dam. I say I made it; nobody single-handedly makes a movie, but I was scriptwriter and kind of in charge. Then in 1961, I think it was, made another one on the building of the dam. ~~, because the dam hadn't started when the first movie was done. Then the second one carried it on to 1961.~~

Makes Motion Picture about Flaming Gorge Dam

When I came up here, one of my first jobs was to make a motion picture about Flaming Gorge, and this had been filmed all during construction by this regional photographer [who]

had a lot of real nice footage. ~~and~~ It was my job to develop that into some sort of a story. So I kind of wove the story of Daggett County, Utah, and an old-timer there purporting to narrate the movie. He really didn't, but it appeared as though he was narrating [as an] off-screen narrator. ~~and~~ [I] weaved together the story of Daggett County and the building of the dam and what the people thought about it there. Of course, in the movie they all thought it was wonderful. (laughter) It was a very fine movie. I liked that better than most of my efforts.

Movie on Reclamation's Cloud-seeding Project

Then let's see. Then in '66, I was quite busy. The Denver office, the Atmospheric Water Resource Division asked me to make a movie on the cloud-seeding project, and so I spent [several] months ~~and months~~ at that, traveling all over. [I] went to Flagstaff for a couple of weeks, China Lake, California, Olympia, Washington, Rapid City. Here in Utah we did some filming, and [near] Reno. [We filmed] all of the experiments that they had going at that time. That movie was called "Rivers in the Sky," and it was a pretty successful film, I thought. Well, it got some awards, anyway.

Storey: Did you have one photographer you worked with?

Rusho: Well, we had a regional photographer here in Salt Lake, and I worked with him some. Whenever we were filming in this region, I would use him. [When I worked] ~~Working~~ for the Denver office, I

used a contract photographer, and he and I traveled around together.

Storey: Do you remember their names?

Photographers He Worked With

Rusho: Yeah. Bill Loeffler was the contract photographer in Denver, L-O-E-F-F-L-E-R. The regional photographer in Salt Lake was Stan Rasmussen, who died of cancer in 1972. Rasmussen was one of the finest still photographers I ever saw in my life. His composition was just beautiful, and very artistic. The only thing is, he couldn't take direction, which was making it very hard to work with if you had something in mind and you wanted to arrange a sequence with certain continuity and you wanted to make sure these scenes were shot. He wouldn't even read scripts, you know. He'd say, "I'll shoot it as I see it, because I have a wonderful eye." Well, sometimes it wouldn't fit. So I tried to avoid working with him whenever I could—but wonderful, wonderful eye—great still photographer.

Storey: Good photographer, but that's what he was good for.

Rusho: Yeah, and he thought he was very good, too. As a lot of photographers do, they tend to be prima donnas.

Storey: Who came after him?

Rusho: Well, after him we had a fellow named Mel Davis, who was a very good photographer, lived in Salt Lake most of his life, and he didn't shoot many motion pictures, though, mainly stills, ~~for him~~, and that's when I started getting into shooting motion pictures myself. Then after Mel Davis, we really didn't have a regional photographer for several years, and I was trying to cover what was necessary from my position as public affairs officer. It was unsatisfactory solution, really.

Storey: You mean with you as the photographer?

Motion Picture on Lake Powell

Rusho: Well, yes, because I really couldn't do that much, couldn't do public affairs and photography. Of course, I *couldn't* make any movies hardly during that time, although in 1969 I made a motion picture on ~~Lake Powell~~, the subject of Lake Powell. The pretext being that although the Park Service *had* Lake Powell as the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, that the lake wouldn't have been there without the dam, and it was really a Reclamation reservoir. So we want people to credit the Bureau of Reclamation for building this wonderful lake, and the regional director *bought* my pretext, and the Washington office did, so I went out and made "Lake Powell: Jewel of the Colorado." That was a pretty good film.

Storey: Sounds to me as if you were doing quite a bit of film-making.

Rusho: Well, off and on. Like I said, I did '64, '65, '66, some filming, and then for three years didn't do any, and then we started in and did Lake Powell, then there would be a dry spell for a while, made another movie on the fish and wildlife aspects of the CRSP. Let's see. What followed? Well, in 1970, Atmospheric Water Resources called me back to do a motion picture on the pilot project in the San Juans, western Colorado, so that took a lot of that year, because we were doing winter filming [of the cloud seeding] and summer filming of the ecological aspects of that pilot project. As it turned out, that was a rather unsuccessful project, but you'd never know it from the movie. The movie made it sound pretty good.

Storey: You mean the cloud-seeding was unsuccessful?

Rusho: Well, they determined that the basis of their experimentation was not what they wanted it to be. What they were doing was seeding on a twenty-four-hour basis, and if it looked like a good seeding day based on their rawinsonde readings and so forth, they would seed for twenty-four hours. Well, frequently the conditions [did not continue] ~~were not~~ favorable for twenty-four hours, so they were overseeding and producing negative results for part of that twenty-four-hour period. So it was not a real successful experiment that way. I guess they still are experimenting, aren't they, over there?

Storey: I think that project may have been closed down in the last year or two now.

Rusho: Really? Closed down?

Storey: I'm not sure, however.

Rusho: The state governments, I guess, are still active. I did a little work in 1991 for the state of Utah, and they were getting some funding from the Denver office for their cloud seeding in the Central Utah area.

Storey: What came next then?

Rusho: ~~Well, after the San Juan pilot project movie, then did this fish and wildlife film.~~ Then In regard to motion pictures, there wasn't much in the mid-seventies until about '77 and '78, [when] we made a new film on Lake Powell that brought it up to date, [a film] that wasn't quite such a Chamber of Commerce pitch as the first one. ~~was.~~ You have to be careful when you make a motion picture that you don't overemphasize something 'til it becomes a Chamber of Commerce pitch and people just turn off and they say, "Oh, that's junk."

Moving into Videos and the Floods in 1983 and 1984

Let's see. In the 1980s, then we got into video, and that was a new field. We hadn't done any video work. By then we had a new regional photographer named Tom Fridmann, F-R-I-D-M-A-N-N. I had a video camera here that I had purchased for the government, and it was not a highly sophisticated one, and was shooting a few scenes where it was necessary. But then when the big flood of 1983 occurred, we had that huge

runoff and Lake Powell filled and the spillways ~~were used and it~~ started being damaged and so forth. We just went to the regional director and said, "We need about \$25,000 worth of video equipment *right now*." "Okay, whatever you need, go ahead and get it," and so we equipped ourselves with a nice studio and a couple of nice new cameras and went down and started filming Glen Canyon. Of course, there was flooding all over the basin in '83. Fontenelle [Dam] was flooding, looked like it might be in danger—Fontenelle Dam. Flaming Gorge was spilling. The Curecanti unit, Crystal and Blue Mesa were both spilling, and Morrow Point was spilling.

So we had to even bring in photographers from other regions to help us cover this in videotape, but our main emphasis was Glen Canyon, of course, because that's where the big flood was, where the damaged spillways were, and where [there was] the possible danger of the dam going out. So we got into video work there and I produced—oh, gosh, ~~it must have been at least a couple of films,~~ a couple of video tapes ~~=these weren't films=~~ on the flooding of '83 and '84. Then the Lower Basin in Boulder City had me make a videotape on flooding down there, [concentrating on] Hoover Dam spilling.

Filming Reconstruction of the Spillways at Glen Canyon Dam in 1984

Then in '84, we filmed the reconstruction of the spillways, which was a real interesting operation. There were a lot of aspects to that that were kind of dangerous but very exciting down in

the construction of those tunnels. When we first started filming, I remember we were asked to document, in videotape and pictures, the damage to the spillways, and the spillways were still [half-]full of [standing] water, although they had shut the water off. It was full up to your waist, and you could walk in. So they had a raft with these headlights on it and batteries, shining on the cliff walls, and Tom and I [waded] ~~walked~~ in. I was carrying the video camera and he was shooting stills, wading up to your waist, you know, icy cold water, over boulders, climbing over boulders that had been eroded out of the tunnel. You couldn't see them; you'd just bump into them with your feet. We knew that up around the elbow section of the tunnel was a monstrous hole. We didn't know how big it was, but we knew that there was a *big* hole up there, and if we kept walking, we were going to fall right in it. But somebody probing ahead with a stick was able to spot that, and we stopped. And here in the dark this gloomy, eerie light shining on the cliff walls, you could see rebar hanging loose and broken concrete, and then up ahead in the incline section of the spillway, the light was shining down enough that we could see a series of steps that cavitation had eroded concrete out into big deep gouges. So that was our initial introduction to it.

Taking Reporters in to See the Damaged Spillway at Glen Canyon Dam

Then we started taking reporters down there. We fixed up a big raft one time and had all the reporters raft up to the damaged section and filmed that, with lights on. ~~and everything.~~ Then

they de-watered it after the 1983 flood and found that this hole that I mentioned was about 30 feet deep and 150 feet long, monstrous hole, but it was *not*, as we suspected, or feared, it was not eroding into the canyon wall. We had feared that it might be, which would endanger the reservoir and the dam and everything, because that big cushion of water was actually taking the impact of the flow and cushioning it so that it stopped the erosion.

Storey: In that big deep—

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Rusho: That happened while it was still spilling like crazy. We had a guy named Burgi come down from the Denver office, cavitation expert, Bill Burgi.

Phil Burgi at Glen Canyon Dam During the Flood in 1983

Storey: Phil Burgi, maybe?

Storey: What?

Storey: Phil Burgi.

Rusho: Phil Burgi, yes. You're right.

Storey: B-U-R-G-I.

Rusho: We were standing on the canyon rim, watching this spillway, you know, with the big flip shooting out, and we could feel the rumbling of the canyon

and the walls and everything, and I asked Phil if he thought it was endangering the dam or the reservoir, and I thought he would say, "Oh, of course not." He didn't say that. He said, "I don't think so." You know, this is one of the world's experts on cavitation, so it made us all a little nervous. I didn't tell reporters that, of course.

Storey: What were the reporters asking?

Rusho: Well, this was a strange period, because when the 1983 flood occurred, the initial reaction of the Bureau of Reclamation is, "Deny everything. Let's not tell them that there's any danger. We've got the situation well under control." Well, with all of this spilling and especially down in Glen Canyon when they started throwing rocks out and everything, they started asking harder questions, saying, "We know what is happening here. Now please tell us. Give us the facts." I wasn't public affairs officer here then. I was merely working as a visual information specialist, but the public affairs officer here was Kathy Loveless, and she was trying to defend the Bureau and not tell them anything, and she got into some very embarrassing meetings with reporters.

Fontenelle Dam During the Flood in 1983

There was one in Rock Springs, I know, where they were having particular emphasis on Fontenelle and what [was] ~~is~~ actually happening and what is the danger to Green River, Wyoming, downstream.

Storey: This is when the spring appeared in the side of the dam up there?

Rusho: [No that was in 1965. But it was endangered again in 1983.] ~~Yes, yes, that's right.~~ At any rate, they asked her a lot of technical questions, because the reporters, it turned out, knew a lot more than Kathy Loveless knew about the flows and the impacts and everything like that. She was very much embarrassed. In fact, the river control officer here, who was Johnston—what was [Ron] Johnston's first name? I've forgotten. But he had to get up and say to the audience that, “Kathy Loveless is wrong in this case.” But I can't give you all the details of that.

That sort of set the tone, and I was trying to get the public affairs officer and the regional director to recognize that we'd better start telling the truth in this thing. I wrote a couple of memos like this, and I think they recognized there's no denying it anymore, so we just started to come flat out and tell them the truth, “This is the situation. Fontenelle is in danger, and if it goes out, we'll notify the sheriff and you'll have twenty-four hours to get out of town,” and that sort of thing.

Storey: That was Fontenelle. What about at Glen Canyon?

Rusho: Well, Glen Canyon never reached the crisis point where we thought it was going out. There was some deep-seated suspicion that things may be not very good. Tom Gamble, the fellow in charge down at Glen Canyon, said he was very much worried about the rumbling going on over the

right spillway, and, of course, he couldn't shut the spillway down, but the thing was vibrating like crazy, and he was worried about that.

Phil Burgi was concerned about the cavitation in the left spillway more than anything. But it was never a point where we had to say, "Well, you'd better stay out of the Grand Canyon. This is going to flood." Fortunately, you know, we told them that, "We don't know how bad the damage is yet. We'll get in there very shortly," which we did, and then we put out news releases showing photographs and describing what had to be done.

Storey: What was the logic of that, bringing in newspaper reporters and all of that?

Reporters and Spillway Damage at Glen Canyon Dam

Rusho: Well, after our initial fiasco of trying to hide the truth and being embarrassed by hiding the truth, we kind of sort of swung the other way. "Let's tell them everything so they will trust us," which worked a lot better. We said, "All right. We have all these people clamoring to take photographs in the spillway. We'll take them on a tour in the spillway," so we had a raft built that held about twenty people, with their cameras and everything, and took them right up to the damage, showed them.

After that, we kept getting daily calls, at least, from all the different reporters throughout the West, from Denver to San Francisco, all over.

They wanted to know. I would go down to our reservoir control office every morning and get the status report on the flows and where we were at and what we expected in the near future, so we kept people pretty up to date on that, and I think our P-R efforts were much more successful.

Storey: Were you public affairs officer then?

Rusho: No, no, Kathy Loveless was, but she left a lot of it to me to take care of.

Storey: So she succeeded Paul?

Rusho: Paul?

Storey: Am I not thinking correctly? Simison.

Bill Plummer Becomes Regional Director and Didn't like Rusho's Approach to the Public Affairs Office

Rusho: No, I succeeded Simison, and I was public affairs officer for—well, let's see. Thirteen years. Then we got this new regional director. All of a sudden his name escapes me. Bill—

Storey: [~~Nelson W.~~] Plummer?

Rusho: Plummer. Bill Plummer, of course. And Plummer came from Denver. I continued doing what I had done. I really didn't play the game of courting the regional director, which I should have done for my career. I had scheduled a filming trip down to Lake Powell to do this Lake Powell movie and a few other activities, and I

kept at it. Then after Bill came in and talked to me, I realized that he was kind of unhappy with my doing all this, that I should have consulted him even before he arrived on the job. I should have made a trip to Denver and asked him what he thought and everything like that.

But as it turned out, I worked for him for a while and he kept adding more and more burdens to the job and not giving me any priorities, what to do first, so it was apparent I was not pleasing him. So I consented to take a down-grade to a visual information specialist, which I did.

Storey: This would have been when?

Rusho: '79.

Served as Public Information Officer in Salt Lake City Form 1966 to 1979

Storey: So you were the public information officer '66 to '79?

Kathy Loveless as Public Information Officer

Rusho: Right. Right. Then Plummer advertised for a public information specialist, had quite a few good applications, and at the last minute threw them all out. Then he got a reapplication for the job and several people applied, and two days before the applications were to close, he called Kathy Loveless—she told me this later—and asked her to please apply, because he wanted her. When the application came in, of course, she was accepted.

Storey: Where was she before?

Public Affairs Service Center Established in Denver

Rusho: Well, she had been in Denver with this office that they had established in 1978, early in '78. They had established a Public Affairs [Service] Management Center, or something like that, and they had about eight people who specialized in writing and audiovisuals and other aspects of public affairs, and it was a Public Affairs Service Center. ~~That's what it was.~~ Their function was to take care of any ~~special~~ needs of a specialized nature from any of the regions, and Kathy was a member of this, doing writing and news releases and so forth, arranging ceremonies or whatever was necessary. ~~So she worked there for a while and she was still there.~~ Bill Plummer knew her there, and then when he came over here, he got her to transfer to Salt Lake, which she did. She held the job for—I guess it was about five years, through Bill Plummer. Plummer left and then ~~Cliff Barrett came in, and~~ she worked for Cliff Barrett.

Kathy was a very nice person, but she favored the regional director. I mean, she did what I didn't do, you know. I was trying to please all the project chiefs and the division chiefs and everybody who worked for the Bureau I felt was calling on me for service and I'd better respond. But her emphasis was the other direction, to please the regional director, and that's all you need[ed] to do; to hell with everybody else. That worked until, I think, all the project managers and

division chiefs just complained loudly enough to Barrett, and Barrett realized that she wasn't really doing everything she was supposed to.

Barry Wirth Becomes Public Information Officer

So she was allowed to resign. She did, and the job was opened and Barry Wirth got it, which he has now. I think Barry is an excellent choice, a fine public affairs officer.

Storey: That was about '84?

Rusho: No. It might have been '84 or '85, yes, something like that.

Storey: And then you retired in '88?

Rusho: In '88.

Storey: Back when you first came up, you were doing films. What else were you doing?

Doing Ceremonies for Reclamation

Rusho: Well, I was doing a lot of ceremonies, which all public affairs [officers] have to do. I was doing exhibits, public interpretation work, some speech-writing and, of course, a lot of meetings and things like that that all bureaucrats have to attend.

Speech Writing for Reclamation

Storey: Tell me about speech-writing. Isn't it difficult to write somebody else's speeches? I presume that's what you're talking about.

Rusho: It is, yeah, and the speeches that we have mostly in the region are more factual reports than opinions. I think in Washington, if you're writing for the commissioner, he's allowed to express a lot of opinions, but when you get down into the field, the opinions are fewer and fewer. It's more, "This is what we've done and this is what we're going to do," and that sort of thing. So it is not terribly difficult to write it, it's just tedious.

Storey: How often would you have been asked to do that kind of thing?

Rusho: Oh, it varied, but I would estimate that there was at least once a month we'd have some little thing or sometimes a big thing. If [the regional director] he was going to make a report to the Colorado Water Congress or the California Water Board or wherever he was going to be, I would have to collect all the information and get it to him, or sometimes just a few brief remarks at some ceremony or something.

Storey: Tell me about ceremonies. What kind of ceremonies are we talking about here?

Reclamation's Two Kinds of Ceremonies

Rusho: Well, you have basically two kinds of ceremonies. You've got ground-breaking and you've got dedications. You start the project and you finish the project. (laughter) So we had them both, and a lot of times we would have both on *every* project. We'd have a big ground-breaking, for instance, at Central Utah Project at Starvation Dam, and Wayne Aspinall was the principal

speaker. Then we would set off a little blast in the field just for show, of course, and then that would be the ground-breaking to get it going. Then sometimes you finish a unit of the project, like Soldier Creek Dam, part of Central Utah Project, you'd have a little dedication with the commissioner and maybe a senator speaking.

Of course, like the ones we mentioned at Glen Canyon and Flaming Gorge, they were a little bigger, but some of our most successful ceremonies are on the smallest projects. It's kind of strange. But it seems that the interest in a project is almost inversely proportional to the size of the town that's near it. You get a little bitty town and everybody turns out for the ceremony and celebration. You get a big city near a project and nobody cares. It's an odd situation.

I remember we had a dedication of Weber Basin Project up at Pine View Reservoir in the Ogden area, the whole Wasatch front down to Bountiful. We got very few people to attend that one. But you have a little ceremony like up at the Lyman Project up at Meeks Cabin Dam, and, gosh, it's just packed with people. So I always kind of preferred the little ceremonies, Uncompahgre Project, ~~you know~~, dedication of Dallas Creek Dam, those kind of things were always a little more fun than the big ones.

Storey: Did you ever have any incidents at ceremonies?

Rusho: Well, the worst incident occurred—in 1966, no, it was more than that, '63, I was still at Glen Canyon, and Herb Simison asked me to go to

Emery County in Central Utah to help plan a ground-breaking of this Joe's Valley Dam. ~~is~~ ~~what it was.~~ So I went up and I helped plan it, and I wrote invitations and things like that. I did *not* attend the actual ground-breaking, but what happened was that they had set a blast to go off up on this cliff, way above the ceremony site, and Senator Frank Moss was speaking. ~~and~~ It had been arranged that when he was through, they would radio the fellow up at the blast site and have a little countdown, you know, five, four, three, two, one, blast.

So while Senator Moss was speaking, the fellow down below said, "All right, it isn't time for the blast yet, but we'll go through a countdown," and he didn't realize the guy up on the hill wasn't at the radio, so he started counting down, and after he got to about number three on this practice countdown, the fellow up on the hill heard the radio, "Three, two, one," so he rushes back and pushes the button, and the blast goes off right in the middle of Senator Moss's talk. (laughter) The whole audience was just startled, and Moss said, "Oh, my gosh, what has happened? Was anybody hurt?"

Storey: That kind of thing is easy to happen, though, I suppose.

Rusho: It sure is, yeah. Of course, at Glen Canyon—I wasn't there, but the ground-breaking blast, when President Eisenhower pushed the button and supposedly set off the first blast at Glen Canyon, they had it wired up that it would actually set off the blast, but right before the ceremony, some

jeep had cut the wires, had driven across the wires and broken it, and they didn't have the communication. So they set up a signal system. When President Eisenhower pushed the button, then he waited and waited, the signal was passed around and people were waving flags, and finally about a minute later, the blast went off. Eisenhower says, "Certainly is a long way out there for that signal, isn't it?" (laughter)

Oh, there's always things that go wrong. You've got to be very flexible at these things. You get rain. We've had to go inside. Nobody ever got hurt at one of them that I can recall. But [you have] ~~got~~ to be prepared.

Storey: Did we provide refreshments or anything at these?

Rusho: No. The government policy is that the Bureau can't finance things like that, and so we always tapped the water users or the electric associations or whatever to finance not only the decoration of the stand, but any refreshments that are provided. We could always get them to do that.

Storey: Did you spend a lot of time with water users?

Meetings Attended

Rusho: At times I did, yes. I attended several of their meetings. I went to several of the meetings of the Colorado River Water Users at Las Vegas. They have an annual meeting at ~~what used to be~~ Caesar's Palace, now held at the Mirage. That's about a three- or four day meeting, and I would attend that. Generally it's a case of trying to meet

the people that you might be associated with and get a face-to-face relationship going.

Storey: Why would you be working with them?

Rusho: Well, the Bureau of Reclamation is pretty much water-user oriented, or at least they were. I don't know how it is today. In fact, that's why Bill Plummer got bumped out of Salt Lake is because he defied the traditional closeness of the water-user/Bureau relationship. Bill Plummer had the misfortune to come in here while we had a Democratic president. ~~Who am I trying to think of?~~

~~Storey: Jimmy Carter?~~

~~Rusho: Jimmy Carter, yeah. Jimmy Carter. And Carter had tried to de-emphasize Bureau projects and set up a hit list for a number of projects to be canceled. He had changed the *name* of the Bureau of Reclamation through Keith Higginbottom, who was commissioner at the time, to Water and Power Resources [Service] ~~Division~~, and had said, "We should not be hand in glove with the water users. We shouldn't be doing just *everything* they want," and so Plummer takes this all to heart, changes all the signs to Water and Power Resources, tries to discontinue the Provo office, cancels meetings with the water users, and, you know, this antagonized particularly the Central Utah Water Conservancy District very much, and they complained to Senator Jake Garn, and it wasn't long before Jake Garn was putting the pressure on Higginbottom (Storey: Keith Higginson, maybe?) Higginson!, yeah, Higginson~~

to get rid of Bill Plummer, and so Bill was transferred to the Lower Colorado Region and he stayed there for a couple of years, then *left* the government service.

David Crandall as Regional Director

So there's *always* been that close relationship. In fact, at one time the Upper Colorado Region did away with the Provo office. The regional director, who was David Crandall at the time, said that, "There is no sense in having a Bureau office of a couple hundred people thirty or forty miles away from a regional office with a couple of hundred people, and we can do it *all* from Salt Lake." So they discontinued that office, but the pressure from the water users ~~down in Provo, in Orem actually,~~ became so intense that they had to reestablish that [Provo] office and, in fact, build a big building down there. ~~, which they house now.~~ They're now having RIFs, and pretty soon I suspect that office will be discontinued.

Storey: Who was the regional director that selected you to be the public affairs officer?

Rusho: It was Crandall.

Storey: And how long was he there then?

Rusho: Well, Crandall came in, I guess it was about '64 when Frank Clinton left. No, it was '65, because I remember Crandall was saying that his *baptism* as regional director was the imminent failure of Fontenelle Dam, which it was September of 1965

when a big *hunk* of the embankment at Fontenelle collapsed and water was seeping through the abutment and coming into the dam and weakening it, and it was starting to collapse, so they were having an emergency evacuation of the reservoir. That was his first assignment as regional director, to take care of that. So that was our first public emergency at Fontenelle Dam. We had others.

Then Crandall stayed on the job until 1978, when he retired. Then we had an acting regional director for about six or eight months, Harl Noble, followed by the appointment of Bill Plummer in '79.

Storey: So Crandall was regional director for about thirteen years, is that right?

Rusho: Must have been, yeah, about thirteen years.

Storey: What was he like as a regional director?

Rusho: He was a rather quiet person. He left public affairs pretty much up to me. He was not a type to be flamboyant or like to make a lot of public appearances and so forth. He was a steady engineer. I liked Crandall, although he was not a particularly friendly person, a back-slapper or anything like that. I think he appreciated what his employees could do for him. So we had a good working relationship.

The only problem I had with him was when I was filming the Lake Powell motion picture. I concluded that I needed people in the scene, recreationists, but I could *not* use people

that I would just find out there, because, in the first place, they wouldn't cooperate, and in the second place, they were always dressed very shabbily—most tourists look pretty bad when you actually photograph them, and they carry their supplies around in used whiskey boxes and things like that, and so their camp looks pretty sloppy. I wanted a nice-looking camp, nice-looking people, cooperative people, and so I arranged to *hire* a family at thirty bucks a day, apiece, to go down there and walk through the scenes and do the things that ~~you've got to do, that looks like tourists are doing.~~ [tourists do.]

So we did it once, but then I had to go back and do some more filming, and when I got to Page with the “model family,” as we called them, here came the assistant regional director, Bob Gilbert, *and* Crandall, and confronted me in the motel room and said, “You can't *do this*. You can't hire people like this.”

I said, “I've already done it. They're here.”

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. JUNE 27, 1995.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. JUNE 27, 1995.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Bud Rusho on June 27th, 1995.

The assistant regional director and the regional director said, “You can't hire a family like this.”

Rusho: I had already done it, so they finally said, “All right, we'll let it go,” and so it was accomplished,

but that was my only real run-in with Dave Crandall, because he did it to be conservative. Of course, he tends to listen to the administrative officer, the assistant regional director, whose main purpose is to save money.

Storey: The movie business has its ups and downs, I guess, situations like that.

Rusho: Yeah, yes, that's true.

Storey: What was Crandall like in dealing with other people?

Rusho: Well, I think that in dealing with the water user groups and so forth, he was successful because he was considered a competent person carrying out the instructions from Congress and the wishes of the water users. ~~He was not a really friendly, likeable person, like I mentioned.~~

I remember Ival Goslin, who was the chairman of the Upper Colorado River Commission, called me one day and said, "I've got a couple of snowmobiles. Let's go up in the mountains."

I said, "Fine, let's go." While we were gone up there, I said, "How come you didn't ask Dave Crandall?"

He said, "Well, Crandall isn't any fun." (laughter) You know, that's the kind of a person he was. In fact, I know him today. He's a very likeable, honest, nice person, but not a lot of fun.

Harl Noble

Storey: What about Harl Noble?

Rusho: Harl was a very intense person. He was head of our planning division, rather nervous, excitable guy. He demanded an awful lot from his employees. I think he was pretty competent, but sometimes he probably lacked in [terms of] employee consideration. His long-term secretary, I've forgotten her name, but one day around 1987, she just said, one Friday afternoon, "I can't take it anymore. I can't take it. Harl Noble and I can't spend another day together. I won't be back Monday." That was her retirement. She left on Friday and never came back. That was her first announcement, too.

If I wanted information on something that was going on in the planning division, he was very competent, knew what his division was doing, and I respected him for that. I'm trying to give both sides of some of these people, because nobody is perfect and nobody is really terrible either.

Ellis Armstrong in Salt Lake City

Storey: Well, I appreciate that. One of the assistant regional directors, I think in this time, would have been Ellis Armstrong.²

Rusho: Yes, yes.

2. An oral history of Ellis Armstrong was conducted by the history program.

Storey: That would have been under Dave Crandall?

Rusho: Yes. I don't know the exact date, but Ellis had been head of the Bureau of Public Roads. He had worked for the Bureau of Reclamation in previous years back in the thirties, early forties, on the Provo River Project, and then he became head of the Bureau of Public Roads; he did some consulting work on the Aswan Dam in Egypt, and was known to have coveted the commissioner's job and was sent to the Upper Colorado Region as assistant regional director probably to simply be on the payroll while waiting for his appointment as commissioner. He had the office next to me, and I could hear through the thin walls [when] ~~occasionally when he would~~—well, I say ~~occasionally~~—several times a day when he would call people and talk about his qualifications to be commissioner. Whether he was calling senators or other influential people, I couldn't be certain, but it seemed to me he did a lot more campaigning to be commissioner than he did active regional office work. And it was very shortly after that, that he was appointed as commissioner.

While he was commissioner, I didn't have a *lot* to do with him. Occasionally I would go to meetings where he would speak. He was the *prime* proponent of the idea that engineers are there to save humanity, no matter what the problems are, and he was the one that emphasized that if you're got environmental problems, engineers can fix them. “We'll *do* something. We'll *build* something. Just call on us and we'll do that.” I *don't* think he was the successful back-

slapper, you might say, the great friend of the congressmen and the senators. He always had a kind of aloof quality about him that did not endear him in a friendly way, although they might have respected his knowledge. So I don't think that he succeeded too well there.

Lake Powell: Jewel of the Colorado

He came out with this book, this little booklet, I should say, called *Lake Powell: Jewel of the Colorado*. He hired a public relations man *specifically* to write that book and go take pictures, and so this fellow wandered around, took a lot of photographs of Lake Powell, and then wrote this book, and the book was made kind of a joke by the Sierra Club and people like that because of its hyperbole, saying that, "A beautiful lake under the sun makes one feel closer to God," and things like that. It was just a little bit overdone.

Storey: This is a leaflet, maybe a quarter of an inch thick?

Rusho: Well, it was eight-by-ten, ran about twenty pages, pictures of Lake Powell and quotations.

Storey: In color, I think.

Rusho: In color. Have you ever seen it?

Storey: I think I got one the other day from a person who was formerly a Reclamation employee.

Rusho: So you know what I'm talking about. An interesting book. I got some calls from people that derided that book. What a ridiculous thing.

Dave Raskin Headed the Sierra Club in Salt Lake City

But I remember I was a pretty good friend of a fellow that was with the Sierra Club here, Dave Raskin, R-A-S-K-I-N. He's a professor of psychology at the university, but he was head of the Sierra Club [in Salt Lake City]. He would confront Ellis Armstrong about projects that the Bureau was going to build, particularly Central Utah Project, and when he did so, Ellis would get so mad that he couldn't even talk. He would just kind of turn red and just kind of freeze up, and this always delighted Raskin. He loved to do that. In fact, I saw him the other day and he remarked on what a [fun] thing that was to confront Ellis Armstrong. (laughter)

Ellis Armstrong's Speeches

But ~~Ellis and I~~, my main contact with him was he always loved to give speeches, and he would give slide talks. And, at the end of every slide talk, he had [a] ~~all these~~ series of sunsets that he'd put on, and then I had to have a recording of "America the Beautiful" [sung by] ~~singing~~, the Tabernacle Choir, and as he started on his windup and the sunsets would come on, I had to turn up the volume on "America the Beautiful" as he was giving his final words, you know. (laughter)

Storey: Well, I'll bet that doesn't show in the text of the speeches.

Rusho: No, no, you wouldn't hear "America the Beautiful." (laughter)

Storey: That's an interesting way to end a speech.

Rusho: He did that many, many times. I got so I had a little recording of "America the Beautiful" just ready to go anytime he'd call.

Storey: Did he spend a lot of time in Salt Lake?

Rusho: Quite a bit.

Storey: As commissioner?

Rusho: He did. He was here frequently. I'd say every couple of months or so, he made a visit to Salt Lake. Of course, this was his home and he would probably visit relatives and so forth. He still lives in Salt Lake.

Storey: Yeah, he does.

Rusho: Have you interviewed him?

Storey: Yes, I interviewed him twice about two years ago now.

Rusho: Good.

Storey: Unfortunately, it was after he'd had his stroke, so it was a slow interview.

Rusho: Yeah. I see. I haven't seen Ellis in four or five years, really, to talk to him.

Storey: Let's see. The next commissioner after Ellis Armstrong would have been [Robert N.] Broadbent? Am I thinking right?

Commissioner Gil Stamm

Rusho: No, Gil [Gilbert G.] Stamm.

Storey: Gil Stamm. Did you see much of him out here?

Rusho: Very rarely. Stamm was a competent person who was appointed to the job, I think, merely to kind of keep the seat warm until they found a guy that they really wanted. Let's see. That might have been Broadbent, I'm not sure.

Commissioner Keith Higginson

Storey: It was Keith Higginson, I think.

Rusho: Oh, Higginson?

Storey: And then Broadbent. Did you ever meet either of them?

Rusho: Oh, yes. Yes, I've *met* all these people on occasion and got to know them on a first-name basis, although not a social basis.

Storey: What was Gil Stamm like?

Rusho: Stamm was a quiet person, as much as I knew him. I only saw him on rare occasions, at a

meeting where he would give a talk or something like that, and I think that his employees liked him, the people that worked right under him. We always kind of knew that he was just there for a short time, but a friendly guy and I liked him.

Storey: What about Keith Higginson?

Water and Power Resources Service

Rusho: Higginson was—well, I actually got to know Keith a little bit better. He had a son going to BYU [Brigham Young University] at the time, and he was from Idaho, so he was *frequently* in the Salt Lake area. Particularly because Higginson was the fellow who wanted to change the name to Water and Power Resources [Service] and Bill Plummer went along with it, I was asked to do a lot of that work that was necessary for changing signs and putting out new stationery with “Water and Power Resources” on it and that sort of thing. Higginson would call on me occasionally to arrange a meeting or help him out in Salt Lake City with reporters, and I think he spoke at some of our ceremonies, but I couldn't tell you which one without some research.

Storey: Well, whatever that thought was, it fled efficiently. Let's see. We were talking about Higginson.

Rusho: Higginson and then Broadbent came in.

Storey: The Water and Power Resources Service, WPRS, “Whoppers,” as we all knew it from the outside.

Give me your impression of that. Was that a good idea, a bad idea, an indifferent idea?

Rusho: Well, my personal feeling was that it was probably a good thought behind it. I'm not sure the name itself was a very catchy name—Water and Power Resources. But the concept that Reclamation was not an appropriate name for what we actually did, because we *don't* reclaim a lot of land, most of it, if there's supplemental water, if there's power and things like that, it really isn't reclaiming, so the idea was good. The problem was that Bureau of Reclamation had become too ingrained in people's thinking, and they simply were not ready to accept a new name at all.

Most of the regional directors simply, when Higginson and other people would say, "We've got to change that name, so get everything changed," they would say, "Okay, sure," and then they wouldn't do it. So most of the regions just simply bided their time and didn't change anything. When Higginson left, the name reverted back to Bureau of Reclamation, and they were sitting pretty, whereas this region had to go back and change all the signs again. So in that respect, it wasn't a very good idea.

Stewart Udall Tries to Change the Department of the Interior Emblem

It was the same as when Stewart Udall wanted to change the emblem of the Department of Interior and he wanted to get rid of the old buffalo head and make this a very symbolic thing

with a stylized mountain and a river. It didn't look like either one of them, but if you had a great imagination, you could say, "That's it." So he made that symbol and said, "That's going to be it. We're going to adopt that." Well, that only lasted about a year or so and he left office and they said, "We're back to the buffalo."

Storey: You have that kind of thing. Of course, Reclamation has a new seal now.

Rusho: Oh, yes, that's right.

Storey: The mountains with the water and that sort of thing, sort of a reflection in an oval—

Rusho: Rather than the drop.

Commissioner Robert Broadbent

Storey: Yes, the raindrop or whatever. What about Broadbent? What was he like?

Rusho: Well, I didn't see a lot of Broadbent. I never thought that his background was the kind of background that they wanted as commissioner. I don't really know how he got the job, but that's none of my business, really. He came in. Let's see, early eighties, wasn't it?

Storey: I think it would have been about '81, yes. Yes, '81 to '84.

Rusho: '81 to '84. And he was there during our big flooding and represented the Bureau at numerous public meetings to do with the flooding of the

Colorado Basin, Colorado River. I think he did pretty good. He established the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies, which I had always thought should be necessary, requiring that we study the effect of Glen Canyon Dam on the Grand Canyon, and he was the one who started that. I respected him for it. I think that he probably was a pretty competent commissioner.

Films and Videos Done by Rusho

That was another—I did three videotapes on the environmental studies of the Grand Canyon, so that involved a lot of my work in the eighties, too, '86, '88, and '93, after I retired, on contract.

Storey: You came back on contract to do that?

Rusho: In fact, I've been working on contracts for the Bureau ever since I left. In '89 I made a film on the Anasazi Indians for the Anasazi Heritage Center at Dolores, Colorado, jointly with the BLM. In 1990 I made a video on Jordanelle Dam and interviewing the experts on why this was not going to fail, like some people predicted. In 1991 I made a video on the Rio Grande for the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District.

Wrote Booklet on Regional Achievements in 1992

In '92 I wrote a booklet that it was required of all regions, in '90, '92, it was going to be an annual booklet on “The Achievements of Your Region.” Have you seen those?

Storey: No, I haven't seen any of those. I've seen a little thing that Pacific Northwest does annually to give out to congressmen and so on for informational purposes.

Rusho: This was that kind of thing, and it had been ordered by the commissioner that we would do this for every region. So they called me early in '92 and said, "Please write something and get the photographs put together," so I did that in '92.

In '93 I did another [videotape on the] Grand Canyon Environmental Studies. In fact, I did two. I did one on the environmental studies and one on the environmental impact statement itself, what the alternatives were that they could show at their hearings. In fact, I'm still under contract with the Bureau.

Storey: Now you're working on the movie film, I believe.

Planned to Catalogue All Regional Motion Picture Film

Rusho: Well, they're going to ask me to go through and catalog the motion picture film that is stored here, that is in such chaotic condition that nobody can really find anything. Not only in the motion picture film, but all the video that we've taken since 1983.

Storey: '83 is when we started, really, with the Glen Canyon thing.

Rusho: Yeah.

Storey: The flooding.

Motion Picture Footage Transferred to Medium of Video

Rusho: The flooding. Then that was straight video. Of course, we have a lot of video made by transferring] ~~that's transfer of~~ motion picture footage to videotape, like all of the construction footage of Glen Canyon is now on videotape, as well as motion pictures.

Storey: What other kinds of activities were you involved in? We've covered speech writing, we've covered film and video making. Publications?

Rusho: Oh, yes. Brochures, a lot of brochures. Not only the tourist brochures that are passed out by the thousands, but also ~~we have~~ annual reports, the CRSP annual report that comes out, the Colorado River Operating Plan, all of these I was helping design and [write.] ~~put some wording in it.~~ Of course, a lot of those kind of reports were engineering statistics, but to go *around* that, you have to have explanations and photographs and design, and I would help on that sort of thing.

Let's see. Anything else? Well, I think that covered my main activities.

Social Activities in the Regional Office

Storey: What kinds of social activity and interaction were there in the regional office here?

Rusho: Surprisingly little social activity in the regional office. There were groups of people, there were individual friends who would get together, but we rarely had any large groupings of people on a social basis. The office does have a Bureau of Reclamation Employees Association, BOREA, they called it, that organizes picnics and sometimes used to organize a Christmas party, but those have become very infrequent, I think, in later years. Sometimes in our own office, in public affairs, we would get together once a year or so, sometimes in the summer, in the back yard of somebody's house, have a barbecue. But you know, it wasn't on a "Everybody's my best friend at the Bureau" basis. It was, "These are nice people, I respect them, and it's nice to get together on a social basis once or twice a year." That's about it.

Storey: Do you think there's anything unique about the Salt Lake office that affects the social dynamic?

"Well, of course, the Mormon connection in Salt Lake City always affects everything. . . ."

Rusho: Well, of course, the Mormon connection in Salt Lake City always affects everything. Even some of the Mormons have told me that they object to Salt Lake City because everything is so polarized in this town, [that] ~~but~~ the first thing you want to know about a stranger, is "is he a Mormon or is he not?" That affects your whole relationship with him [of her]. If you are a Mormon and he is a Mormon, or she, then you have a different social basis than if they're not. Of course, some of the Mormons have even complained to me that they

don't like living in Salt Lake because the peer pressure—they feel like they're being watched by their fellow Mormons to make sure they don't transgress any of the rules, like drinking coffee or taking an alcoholic beverage or something.

Popularity of Regions among Reclamation Personnel

For that reason, I have heard it said that of *all* the regional offices, Salt Lake is the *least* popular. It may be the most popular with some Mormons, but among *all* the other people, it is the least popular place to be stationed because of that polarization of the Mormon connection. We've always thought that probably Boulder City would be maybe the most attractive, Sacramento second, Boise third, Billings now fourth, and Salt Lake fifth.

Storey: You mean from a personal perspective, “we,” your family?

Rusho: No, I'm thinking of the whole Bureau, this is my opinion of the general popularity, if you're going to be sent to an office, which one would you prefer going to. Salt Lake would be the bottom.

Storey: Why would LC, in Boulder City, be the top, Lower Colorado [Region]?

Rusho: Well, because of the climate, the nice warm climate, because they have no [state] income tax in Nevada, ~~versus state income tax~~, because of the recreation facilities there, and the ~~little-well~~, slightly freer atmosphere. Living in Salt Lake for

thirty years as a non-Mormon, I can feel when I leave the state. It suddenly feels different. So I think other people sense that, too.

Storey: We haven't talked about the chief engineers. When you came here, it would be right at about the time—well

Reclamation's Chief Engineers

Rusho: Bellport had left. Harold [G.] Arthur?

Storey: Yes, Harold Arthur was the next chief engineer. Did you have any interaction with them?

Rusho: My interaction with Arthur was rather remote. When I was working with Archie Kahan at the Atmospheric Water Resources Division, I would go talk to Harold occasionally, but very briefly, you know, just tell him what we were doing, you know, it would be a five-minute conversation, shake hands, and I would leave.

So I really can't tell you too much about Harold. I think that he got the shaft, of course, after Teton Dam failure, because he had to take the blame for it, and he was not really responsible. I thought that was unfortunate, because he was a nice, sincere, honest person, I thought, got along with most people.

Chief Engineer Barney Bellport

Storey: What about the successors? Of course, Harold never really had the title "chief engineer." They changed that with Bellport.

Rusho: Oh, yes, they did. Bellport was much more of a little dictator than Harold Arthur was.

Storey: Really?

Rusho: Oh, yeah. Bellport, as I understand—you know, I'm talking a lot of hearsay here, because Bellport never called me and told me to do anything. But from other people I get the feeling that he was pretty autocratic in his way of operating, and that reflected—of course, Wylie in Glen Canyon was pretty autocratic, too, and maybe he was just carrying down the feeling that he got from the chief engineer.

Darrell Webber

Storey: What about subsequent chief engineers, Darrell [W.] Webber, for instance?

Rusho: Darrell Webber worked in this office as assistant regional director for a year or so.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. JUNE 27, 1995.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. JUNE 27, 1995.

Storey: You were saying that you and Mr. Webber got along quite well.

Rusho: Oh, yeah. Darrell Webber and I were pretty good friends. I think I visited in his home occasionally, and I was certainly on a friendly basis here in the office. When I couldn't get satisfaction from anybody else, I'd always go to Darrell, because I knew he would help me out and give me the information I need, some advice. He and I

remained friends after he became so-called chief engineer, whatever, in Denver. I talk to him occasionally, not very often.

Decision to Retire

Storey: Why did you decide to retire?

Rusho: Well, it was a matter that I was over fifty-five, had my years in. Also the fact that, ~~I had—see, I had no video knowledge, videotaping, video-producing knowledge prior to 1983.~~ After 1983, I got pretty familiar with most of the equipment and I became a pretty good video photographer, editor, scriptwriter, and realized that these are talents that are marketable.

Felt His Skills Were Marketable in Retirement

In 1987, for instance, while I was still working for the Bureau, we needed a photographer to do some filming in the Grand Canyon, and I was not available because I was working here on ceremonies ~~and so forth~~, so they hired this retired Bureau photographer from California, Joe Dahilig, for \$25 an hour to go down the canyon, enjoying himself, taking movies. I thought, “I’m missing something here.” (laughter) So that was *one* of the incentives, but I really had had enough of the day-to-day personnel meetings, the flow of paper over my desk that two-thirds of it was meaningless but I *had* to go through it, and that sort of thing that I really wanted my freedom, and I was very glad that I left. Of course, like I say, they immediately hired

me to make a motion picture on the Anasazi Heritage Center, on contract.

Storey: And it sounds as if you've been quite busy ever since.

Rusho: Oh, I have been, yes.

Storey: Did you have any sort of emotional adjustments to make as you left Reclamation? How long had you been here?

Rusho: Well, I'd worked in the regional office for twenty-five years.

Storey: And prior to that, another four or five or six at Glen Canyon.

Rusho: Yeah. Well, I didn't really feel that I was leaving Reclamation. I had developed some pretty close friends in the Bureau, not a lot of social interaction, but they were close in the office, and I was pretty well respected. I had been assured that they were going to hire me back as soon as they could, that I was going to maintain my contact particularly with the public affairs officer, ~~and my close relationship~~, so I was simply exchanging one type of situation for a better one, where I maintained my contacts.

Storey: And you got rid of a lot of the stuff you didn't want to do anyway. (laughter)

Rusho: That's right. So I'm sorry I didn't do it a little sooner. It has worked out well and I've had time for personal things, you know, the writing I've

done on the history of Glen Canyon, Lee's Ferry. I wrote a book on a guy named Everett Ruess, who got lost in the desert, and that's a pretty popular book. I've done some publishing. I published a book last year on the history of Glen Canyon. I didn't write it, Greg Crampton wrote it.

Storey: From the time you came to Reclamation 'til the time you left, there were a lot of changes in the agency. You've already talked about the change in the way they valued personnel, for instance.

Rusho: Yes.

Storey: Were there any other changes like that, that you think back on?

Reclamation Employees' Reactions to Public Involvement in and Interest in Projects

Rusho: Well, of course, the changes in the evaluation of personnel reflected [changes in] the mission of the agency. When I joined, our mission was to construct facilities of various kinds to deliver water and power, and the engineers who were in charge really *felt very sincerely* that they were doing America a wonderful service, and just let them do their thing and don't interfere with us and we will provide America with great benefits.

Throughout the years, they found that the public, through reporters and federal agencies and everything, started *poking* their nose into what these engineers were doing, and they didn't like it. They wanted to be left alone to do their thing. This antagonized a *lot* of the engineers,

particularly the older engineers used to the public acclaim that came to a dam-builder. They were very much used to being hailed as the saviors of our area and they had built these wonderful projects for us, and not suddenly, but very gradually, this faded away and they started being poked at. "Why are you doing this to our area? Why are you killing our birds?" and this sort of thing. They didn't like it. So *most of those* people are retired now, but there was substantial bitter feelings for a while there.

Storey: Is there anything else we ought to talk about?

Rusho: Well, let's see. I can't think of anything very important. There are a lot of little activities that I went through the years, people that I had known, photographers. Well, you know, there were particular incidents, like when Princess Margaret visited Glen Canyon, that were pretty interesting.

Storey: Tell me about it.

Princess Margaret Visits Glen Canyon Dam

Rusho: Well, she came there with Lord Anthony [Snowdon], I believe she was married to, a photographer. She was invited by the recreation people, the concessionaires of the Park Service at Wahweap. She arrived on the plane, and my job was to take care of the reporters and to get some photography. So we met her on the plane and everything proceeded pretty well. Then we took her down to the dam, and we had arranged that we would have a photographers' platform where the photographers would get up there and then she

would stop at a certain point as she came across in a car caravan. And she [was to] ~~would~~ get out and they could take pictures of her standing there. Well, the car caravan arrived at the dam, and she didn't want to go clear over to where she was supposed to get out of the car. She said, "I want to get out now," and the driver said, "No, we're supposed to go up ahead." She said, "I'm getting out now." She opened the door while the car was moving, so he stopped the car and she got out.

All the photographers and everybody were waiting on the other side of the dam, and we saw her get out, so they said, "What are we going to do?"

I said, "Well, let's go," so we all jumped off the platform and started running across the dam, and then here came all the Scotland Yard people to keep us away from Princess Margaret. (laughter) So we had this big confrontation of photographers and reporters and Scotland Yard pushing us away. Her husband, ~~who is a~~ ~~photographer~~, was a photographer—he's not married to her now, Lord Anthony—he realized what was going on and where she was supposed to be, so he just grabbed her arm and said, "Let's go," and he marched her over and plunked her down on the side of the dam where we could get good photographs, and we all jumped back on the platform and took our pictures. (laughter)

Storey: When was that?

Rusho: 1965–September.

Storey: So that was after you had come up to the regional office, actually.

Rusho: Yes, it was.

Storey: I guess it was an American driver?

Rusho: Probably was. I think it was a Bureau of Reclamation driver, as a matter of fact.

Storey: And he didn't realize when Princess Margaret said, "I want to get out here," that was *not* a request. (laughter)

Rusho: (laughter) That's right.

Storey: Interesting. Any other stories like that?

Rusho: Well, let's see.

Rusho: I can't think of any important ones that you'd be interested in.

Storey: Sometimes it isn't the important ones, it's the colorful ones that are interesting.

Rusho: That was kind of a colorful one. Let's see. Other ceremonies?

Storey: Did you ever have any other presidents come out for a ceremony?

Rusho: No, no, we didn't have any presidents while I was working for Reclamation. We had Lady Bird and that was it. Let's see. I think the last president

that came to a dam was probably Harry Truman up at Hungry Horse.

Congressman Wayne Aspinall

Storey: Wayne Aspinall was quite a figure in water development in this area. What was he like?

Rusho: Aspinall was kind of a—well, I would say he had conflicting sides to his personality. He was a very strenuous, hard-working proponent of water development. He came from Grand Junction area, Palisades, Colorado, and like me, you know, he probably grew up with Reclamation in his back yard and realized what it had done for that part of the country. He *really pushed* it. He was instrumental in getting the Colorado River Storage Project passed in 1956, of course.

But on the other hand, he also appreciated the value of the wilderness and was chief writer of the Wilderness Act of 1964, so he had these two sides to him. I remember he gave a speech that I attended in—it would have been 1981, something like that—twenty-fifth anniversary of the C-R-S-P, and he said, “Well, gentlemen, we got the C-R-S-P passed just in time. If we had waited any time at all, Glen Canyon would have been discovered as a national park and we would not have been allowed to build a dam.” And he's right.

Storey: Do you remember where he gave this speech?

Rusho: Yes, it was in Salt Lake at the Airport Hilton, about 1981. I think it was to the Upper Colorado River Commission.

Storey: Did you get to know him at all? What was he like, his personality?

Rusho: A friendly fellow, you know, nice guy, as far as I was concerned. I handled a dedication, this one where he spoke at the ground-breaking of Central Utah Project at Starvation Dam, and he was giving this speech, and it was nip and tuck whether it was going to rain us out or not. We saw the clouds coming. Dave Crandall, regional director, said, "Should we hold it in the school or outside?"

It wasn't raining yet, so we kind of looked at each other and said, "Well, let's hold it outside." So it was outside, all right. We held it, and Wayne Aspinall set off the blast and everything, and then he gave this little talk and started talking about how the need for water development, and he looked up at the sky and he said, "We *really* need the water, and *here it comes.*" And just then it started to pour rain. (laughter) So we all ran for it and got out of there.

Storey: Once again, I'd like to ask whether you're willing for the tapes and transcripts from this interview to be used by researchers inside and outside Reclamation.

Rusho: Oh, of course. Sure.

Storey: Great. Thank you very much. I appreciate you coming in two days in a row.

Reclamation's Art Program and Norman Rockwell

Bureau of Reclamation History Program

Rusho: One little ceremony that I didn't tell you about was—first of all, 1969 was a big year.

I got involved with the art program of the Bureau of Reclamation. The art program was a really big deal in that year. It was run by a fellow named John DeWitt, out of the Washington office, whose wife was an artist. He had done some art work himself, but he was a very good friend of the head of the Museum of Modern Art in New York [City], and he was able to push through this art program to get famous artists to paint paintings of Reclamation projects and donate them to the Bureau of Reclamation as a tax write-off—which was allowed in those years. And, what they got for their effort was a nice trip out West, all sponsored by the Bureau of Reclamation—all expenses paid, and tours and-so-forth.

And so in that year—I've forgotten the first ones I got involved with. I remember there were a couple in Colorado, and then I was asked to take Norman Rockwell to Glen Canyon. So he arrived with his wife Molly, and John DeWitt, of course, was there, and me. Went up the lake and had a wonderful little tour—rained, it was dismal weather—but Rockwell was so accommodating, so nice, he just had nothing but compliments and thanks for our help and we went to Rainbow Bridge. I wanted to take a picture of him *and* the bridge. So I asked him to sketch the bridge. And he made a rough sketch, and I took a picture of him and the bridge. And then he turned to me, and he said “You'd probably like to have this sketch.” And I said, “Yeah, yeah, I'd kind of like

to have it.” So he gave it to me. And, later that night John DeWitt came over and said “You realize that anything an artist does is Washington property—including that sketch he gave you.” So I had to give him that.

But anyway, we got through with the lake tour, and then we went back to the dam and DeWitt wanted him to paint the dam. And Rockwell looked at the dam, and he said “That’s a mechanical drawing. To do something like that. Where’s some human interest.”

So I said, “Well there’s some Navajos living around here.” So he said “Well get me a Navajo family.” So I took Rockwell and Molly and we drove out of Page, and I got to a hogan, just an ordinary hogan, and I went in and I tried to talk to this Navajo. He says, “I don’t speak English. Don’t speak English.” And I said, “Too bad, I’ve got an artist out in the car that would like to sketch you doing something.” And I said, “It’s Norman Rockwell.” “*Norman Rockwell*, I’ll be out.” (Laughter). (Storey: Yeah, they always pull that.) So he ran out the door and got his wife and the daughter and a dog and we went to a stable where he had a horse, and then we posed the horse with the family and the dog and the little girl, I think was sitting on the horse or something. Then Molly took pictures, his wife, took slides of that. Then we went down to the dam, and I took pictures of Rockwell standing out on the canyon rim looking at the dam, and-so-forth. Then when we get the painting he has combined the two. He has put the family and the horse and the dog

standing on the canyon rim looking at the dam.
And that is the famous painting that we have.

Storey: Yes, and it's been slipping in and out of my
consciousness to ask you about that specific
painting. But, tell me how you spell DeWitt?

Rusho: D-e-W-i-t-t

Storey: All one word?

Rusho: Yes.

Storey: OK. Tell me about anything else with that
program.

Rusho: Well I took people on about three occasions.
There was Rockwell, and then I conducted—all
with John DeWitt, of course—a couple of painters
to Flaming Gorge. Well, one of them was Lynn
Fausett. Painted him with the Flaming Gorge
Formation, not the dam, in the background. When
we went up with Rockwell, we also had Dean
Fausett with us. Dean Fausett is a very good
painter, lives in Vermont and has for years.
Paints large scenes of mostly realistic subjects,
not abstracts—of Wahweap Marina, he painted a
lot of historic scenes from the John Wesley
Powell expeditions. So we did that.

Then I took some painters to western
Colorado. And, we visited the Morrow Point
Dam, took a tour across the mountains—across
Cinnamon Pass, four-wheel-drive, had some good
times there. I think those three occasions was
where I had contact with the art program. Plus

the fact that we got all the paintings stored at the Glen Canyon Visitors' Center. They were being raided by politicians, and a lot of those paintings have disappeared because they were simply—some politician would say “I want a certain nice painting. I know you've got it. I want it in my office.” And it would appear in his office. Then when he departed the painting would be gone too. And so, most of those painting have disappeared—the really good ones. The Glen Canyon painting was just too famous for anyone to get away with. (Storey: The Rockwell). The Rockwell, yeah. We incorporated it in our exhibit down there. They took it back to Washington last summer and said they were cleaning it. I was getting very suspicious that we wouldn't see it again, but it did come back.

Storey: Yeah there is an active program of art conservation and cleaning going on. They put some sum every year into it, and they can only do a few at a time because of the amount of money that is involved.

Rusho: But anyway I was leading up to this Glen Canyon—right after Rockwell appeared, in fact while he was still there, they had the unveiling of the bust of Senator Carl Hayden; because the visitor center at Glen Canyon is named the Carl Hayden Visitors' Center. So old Carl Hayden was there. He was still alive. He lived, I think, one more year, until 1970. But he came and Dominy was there, and Dominy gave a little speech and he [Carl Hayden] bragged about how he had put Page on the south side of the river single-handedly by influencing Congress. “I

would not give my approval to that project if the town was going to be on the Utah side of the river.”

Well, ~~this was where~~ Reclamation really wanted it—right about where Wahweap Lodge is today. Because that’s where the big gravel deposit was found for the aggregate and-so-forth. But Hayden says I want it on the south side so Reclamation was forced to build Page on the south side of the river. (Storey: By Hayden.) By Carl Hayden, and he bragged about that. He did it. That’s all that I can think of, more stories.

Storey: Good, well, I really appreciate it. Thank you.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. JUNE 27, 1995.
END OF INTERVIEWS.

APPENDIX 1**Norman Rockwell at Glen Canyon**

By
W. L. (Bud) Rusho

Receiving word that Norman Rockwell was going to visit Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell was something of a surprise, but a pleasant one. In the summer of 1969, when the call came, I was employed as Public Affairs Officer for the Upper Colorado Region of the Bureau of Reclamation, with my office in Salt Lake City. And Glen Canyon Dam was the largest project in our Region.

Rockwell's visit was part of a then on-going endeavor called the Visiting Artists Program, designed to give prominent American artists paid visits to Reclamation projects throughout the West. For their part, the artists agreed to each produce a wall painting, usually on canvas, of their impressions and to donate it, as a tax deduction to the Bureau of Reclamation. When sufficient paintings were obtained, they would be sent around the country as a traveling exhibit. Since the tax laws then permitted such tax deductions, the program was ideal for BuRec as a public relations effort. The artists themselves would enjoy the paid vacation.

The whole scheme was the dream child of John DeWitt, then working as a Public Relations Specialist for BuRec in Washington, D.C.. DeWitt had good connections with the art world through his wife, who was a capable, professional artist herself. John managed to sell his idea to his supervisor, and eventually to the Commissioner of Reclamation, Floyd Dominy.

DeWitt's procedure was to first, negotiate with each artist to select his or her desirable Reclamation project to visit, then to make arrangements through each Regional Office of BuRec so as to provide lodging, transportation, and guides. In the Upper Colorado Region, I was designated as liaison and guide. (It was a tough job, but somebody had to do it). John singled me out because I knew something about art history, I was familiar with guiding dignitaries, I could take acceptable photographs and I could drive a car decently. Also, John and I were friends, going back to 1963 when he accompanied me, (I was acting as photographer), and prominent historian C. Gregory Crampton down Cataract Canyon and into Glen Canyon, though sections destined to be flooded by the rising Lake Powell. After the Visiting Artists Program got under way in 1968, I accompanied John and various artists to Flaming Gorge Dam, to Morrow Point Dam, to the Front Range in Colorado, and across the rugged San Juan Mountains on four-wheel drive roads. All of this was as much fun for me as I believe it was for the VIP artists. .

Then in September 1969, DeWitt called to say that he had arranged for Norman Rockwell and his wife, Molly, to visit Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell, and that he wanted me along. Needless to say, I was soon on a plane to Page where I obtain loan of a local Government automobile.

Norman and his wife, Molly, were staying at the Empire House Motel in Page, not an auspicious accommodation by today's standards, but mid-scale in 1969. When I arrived, there was John DeWitt who introduced me to the Rockwells. Norman, thin, over six feet tall, narrow face wavy dark gray hair, dressed in a tweed jacket, smiling broadly as we were introduced. Molly, his wife, much shorter, also smiling, stood by his side.

I don't remember much of our first conversation except his reply, after I had expressed my honor at meeting such a famous artist, he said simply, "I'm not an artist; I'm just an illustrator." I added that nonetheless, he had produced some memorable paintings that were universally loved throughout America. But I realized when he said it that he was right; he had found his niche in conveying human emotion by way of illustration, and he had become incredibly famous—even loved—for his unusual ability to project human interest in illustration art. As we all discussed painting over a coffee (or was it a beer?), Norman told us that he used certain tried and true strategies to make his paintings work. One was that "If the painting doesn't seem to work, I add a small dog, and if necessary, a dog with a bandaged foot." We all had a good laugh. Yet I don't think Rockwell was kidding; I remembered that he really had really put bandaged dogs in his paintings!

As the day was still young, DeWitt proposed that we proceed to the view the scene that he wanted Rockwell to paint: Glen Canyon Dam. We did not visit the dam itself but drove to an established visitor downstream viewpoint where we could get a good look at the face of the dam, the river canyon below, and Glen Canyon Bridge, 700 feet above the water. As usual, I was stunned by the rust-red color of the rocky gorge, the blue hint of Lake Powell seen above the dam, and the clear, greenish river flowing from the powerplant far below.

By the fact that I had spent five years of my life with the day-by-day construction of the dam, 1958 to 1963, conducting tours for reporters, writing magazine articles, producing movies, setting out viewpoints, and supervising photography, I confess to always having a felling of nostalgia and pride when I viewed the dam.

Besides his thin frame, high forehead, wavy gray hair, and noble New England features, Rockwell always held onto his pipe. Whether in his hand or clenched between his teeth, the pipe was almost a part of him. Yet during the three days that I was with him, I never saw him lighting the pipe or actually smoking it.

At the fenced viewpoint of the dam, Norman first looked in silence, and then walked out onto the rough sandstone rim itself, where he could perhaps obtain more of a three-dimensional view. Still, he kept his silence, until finally, he asked John DeWitt, "Do you want me to paint that? It's nothing but a mechanical drawing!" Yet Norman was not angered, nor dismissive, yet seeming to ask how John and I were going to add a human element to the scene.

Without hesitation, I suggested adding a Navajo family. I was fully aware that the land of Page and the south side of the canyon were formerly Navajo Reservation (now called by the tribe "Navajo Nation"), and that many Navajo families lived in houses and hogans just south of Page. Furthermore, Navajos were, and still are, a fascination to most other Americans.

"Do you think you could find such a family?"
Norman asked

Put on the spot I had to admit that I didn't know any, but I thought I could find a Navajo family quickly. How I could do this was just a guess, as I was hoping for just plain dumb luck.

So I drove from the dam viewpoint, with Norman and Molly in the backseat, through the town of Page, and south into Navajo country. I had not gone more than a mile when I saw a well-made Navajo Hogan (their traditional

shelters made of boards, sticks, mud and brush) off to the east side. I drove in on a rough dirt road, then stalled a few minutes—as per Navajo custom—before getting out of the car. Then I walked to the hogan, knocked on the door, and waited.

Soon a Navajo man, about 40, opened the door, and said some Navajo words, apparently to ask what I wanted. Since I could not speak Navajo, I told him that we wanted a Navajo family to pose for an artist who wanted to include them in a painting of the dam. He still spoke Navajo, apparently not understanding my request.

It wasn't until I mentioned the name "Norman Rockwell" that he suddenly understood English. "Norman Rockwell," he explained as he shook my hand and emerged from the hogan. I told him that we needed a young family, perhaps a horse, and maybe a dog. And he said "Where do you want us to be?" He said he had a horse in a nearby corral and that he and his family would meet us there in about an hour.

So off to the horse stable we went. There, arriving ahead of time, (as opposed to traditional Indian time), were Navajos John Lane, his wife, daughter, son, and his horse, Glen Canyon and the dam were a couple of miles away, out of sight. Although we were in the shade of trees, looking toward a sandy hill, Norman thought this posing was ideal. I wondered at the time how Rockwell was going to combine images of the Navajo family with that of Glen Canyon Dam. I also wondered why he was neither sketching nor painting.

I had not reckoned with Molly, Norman's wife, who was unobtrusively, very quietly, taking 35 mm slides of everything we were doing, and from every angle, including scenes earlier of the dam and of the Navajos. Norman told

me later that he would rely on Molly's photos to make a composite painting. Of course, I was also taking slide photos at the same time, but Rockwell didn't need mine; all he needed were Molly's.

Norman had the Navajo woman sit on the horse, with the man and boy standing on the ground. Exactly what poses were made and with how many alternatives he tried are beyond memory. He said that when he returned to his home in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, he would select the best pose or even combine poses from Molly's photographs into a final painting of Glen Canyon Dam.

Perhaps these Navajos had a dog, but I don't remember one, nor does one show up in my photos. Yet Norman's final painting conspicuously displays a hound dog, stoop shouldered, looking sadly into the canyon. I am sure Norman invented the dog. And of course he invented the eagle flying above the dam.

With no fanfare, I saw Norman pay several dollars to John Lane for posing for photographs. Rockwell, as usual, had just demonstrated his professional appreciation of others.

Early the next day, I pickup Norman, Molly, and John DeWitt at their motel and drove northwest, across Glen Canyon Bridge, five miles to Wahweap Marina, and specifically, to the Government boat docks. There floated the so-called "Steel King," a heavy 26-foot cabin boat, used by the Bureau of Reclamation for official purposes. It was heavy, a little slow, but comfortable for a short cruise.

For some reason, known only to John, artist William Dean Fausett (1913-1998), was invited to go along on the boat trip, Dean, a excellent artist, known for portrait,

genre, landscape, mural painting, etching, lithography, and sculpture, was a fine fellow usually, but he spent most of this boat trip trying to ingratiate himself with Rockwell, and to shine in Norman's reflected glory. To my annoyance, any time I tried to photograph Norman, Dean almost always seemed to jump into the scene beside him.

Joy Gilleland, a nubile young Page High School student, known for her proficiency at water skiing, as well as for her youthful attractiveness, was also invited.. Joy and Norman appeared to have an instant friendship, so I asked Joy to skip school and come along. As it turned out, the weather was too rough for water skiing, but she added a young spark to our middle to older age group.

Greeting us at the dock was Larry Sanderson, a veteran of Glen Canyon Dam construction who, in construction years, had performed much heavy lifting, including highscaling—hanging from a long rope while working on rock cliffs. But he was also an accomplished river boatman, having voyaged, and led tours, through the Grand Canyon several times. So Larry was to be our boat captain and cook for our two-day expedition. Knowing just what was needed, Larry had loaded onboard food, drinks, cooking supplies and tents. We were to entertain the Rockwells as lavishly as possible—at least for a Government agency.

Naturally, we all hoped that the weather would be sunny and warm, the better to show off the amazingly brilliant hues resplendent in the contoured and rounded cliffs and buttes fronting the blue-green water of the lake. Yet as we stood beside the Steel King, getting ready to board, the sky was becoming overcast and the wind was picking up. Nevertheless, as he boarded the boat, Norman said, "This is going to be a wonderful treat."

So up the lake we headed. Occasionally it was windy, but fortunately, the heavy Steel King was almost oblivious to the onslaught of waves. And off and on it rained, so that the usually orange cliffs were more of a somber light brown. All the while, Larry and I were telling Norman and Molly stories about the history of Glen Canyon. And they seemed to love it.

After about four hours we arrived at the mouth of Forbidden Canyon Bay, the approach to Rainbow Bridge. Soon we were docked at the National Park Service Marina,³ where we disembarked, and headed, on foot, up the trail to the Bridge. Fortunately the wind and rain had stopped, although it continued cloudy.

In 1969, it was still about a mile walk from the marina, along a dirt and rock trail, a magnificent stroll beneath towering sandstone walls to Rainbow Bridge itself. Coming on the bridge from the north, Norman paused and said, "What a magnificent sight!"

On we walked until the bridge itself loomed almost overhead, backgrounded by the lofty Navajo Mountain, I asked Norman if he would pose as if sketching so that I could photograph him, supposedly in action. He heartedly agreed. We somehow found an 8" x 10" piece of pink construction paper, and Norman quickly drew an astoundingly accurate sketch of Rainbow Bridge, signed it and handed it to me. I thought "Wow, what a souvenir!"

We examined the natural bridge from various, easy to reach, viewpoints, then almost reluctantly, turned back

1. The Rainbow Bridge Marina no longer exists. It was replaced a few years later by the Hanging Rope Marina, a few miles downstream on the main channel.

down the trail toward the boat dock. Again on the Steel King, cruising Lake Powell once again, we headed out of the narrow side canyon to the main channel, then on upstream to a lovely camping spot. Lake Powell, initiated by the restriction of gates at Glen Canyon Dam in 1963, was still in its initial filling period, so that the shoreline remained pristine, never yet having been inundated. Our camp was made on the shore, adjacent to many small trees and bushes, what Major John Wesley Powell called “glens” one hundred years earlier.

Larry Sanderson was his usual talented self in preparing a camp dinner, after which we sat around a small fire discussing scenery, history, philosophy, and painting—a treasured memory for all of us.

As we were preparing to retire, John DeWitt told me, rather forcefully, “All art objects produced by artists while being conducted by the Bureau of Reclamation Art Program are the property of the program itself. Please give me the sketch of Rainbow Bridge made by Norman Rockwell.”

I thought about telling DeWitt to jump in the lake, preferably from a high cliff, but as I was there at his invitation I meekly handed over the sketch. Of course the sketch was never seen again; if it still exists it probably resides in the late John DeWitt’s private property collection.

On the second day, we boated around Lake Powell periphery, probing into a few side canyons wide enough to admit the Steel King. Then we proceeded back to Wahweap. At the dock I said my goodbyes to Norman and Molly and left for my motel. Norman’s last words to me were “What a wonderful expedition we had!” I thought how much better it

could have been with brilliant warm sunshine, but Norman was all smiles.

Thus I had spent parts of three days with the Rockwells, for me, an unforgettable experience. Norman and Molly were two of the most likeable people I had ever met, always gracious, never presumptuous nor patronizing, treating everyone as an equal, whether a boatman or a mere public relations-photographer. A couple of weeks after the experience I received a rolled up and signed reproduction of Norman's classic "Winter in Stockdale." Rockwell sent Larry Sanderson a painting kit.

Early in the year 1970, Norman's painting "Glen Canyon Dam" arrived at the visitor center near Page. It was huge, 51" x 77" and it showed the dam from the canyon rim where we had stood. Yet dominating the painting was the John Lane family, backs to the painter, complete with horse, a sad hound dog and an eagle. The Navajo family seem to be in shadow, just as they were at the horse stable where we photographed them. As DeWitt told me later "No, it's not a great painting. It's an illustrator's view of the dam, with an attempt to humanize it by including the Navajo family." As Norman had predicted, it is basically a mechanical drawing, yet with people. Norman had done his magnificent best according to his craft of illustration.

And I agree. The visiting public will always love the painting. And I am proud to have had some small role in its creation, and especially, to have been involved in the story behind the scene—and to have spent time with Norman Rockwell and his wife, Molly.

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